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A QUEER BOOK.

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BY

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

James Hogg



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
MDCCCXXXII.

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PRINTED BY ANDREW SHORTREED, THISTLE LANE, EDINBURGH.

THIS

MOTLEY WORK,

MADE UP OF ALL THE FOWLS' FEATHERS THAT FLY IN THE AIR,

FROM THE ROOK TO THE WILD SWAN,

AND FROM THE KITTY WREN TO THE PEACOCK,

AS THE SHEPHERD'S *VADE MECUM*,

AS THE VARIED STRAINS IN WHICH HIS SOUL DELIGHTETH,

HE DEDICATES MOST RESPECTFULLY TO

CHRISTOPHER NORTH

AND

TIMOTHY TICKLER,

ESQUIRES.

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THE WIFE OF EZDEL-MORE.

FYTTE THE FIRST.

THERE dwelt a Wife in Ezdel-more,
A wondrous wife I wot was she,
For she had the unyirthly lore
Of witchcraft and of glamourye.

And she could blench the blooming cheek,
And she could blind the bauldest ee,
For she could make the winds to speak,
And the breezes laugh outower the lea.

And the lasses and the lads gaed gyte;
They danced, they caper'd, and they sung,
Then laugh'd quhill tears ran down their cheeks,
Yet knew not where the sport had sprung.

And she could bid the sterns stand still,
As glowing up the heavenly lones;
And the sterns blinkit with affright,
And stood as still as they 'd been stones.

She brought the eagles from the rocks,
And snoolit them in her cursed pens;
She turn'd the shepherds to moorcocks,
And the pretty maidens to moorhens.

Then there was blinking on the bent,
And flappering ower the purple fells;
For the brave creatures were intent
On toying mid the heather bells.

At moulting times there was deray,
As the auld dames have told to me,
For all that they could do or say,
The moorcocks would not let them be.

But yet there grew such rage for change,
That the witch wife was sore beset,
For every morn the men and maids
Were thronging at her sinful yett.

And the moorhens biggit their lo'esome nests
Among the bells of blooming ling,
And their lovers scaled the morning mists,
And crow'd upon the wanton wing;

Quhill it fell about the Lammas tide,
When the moorland men do won their hay,
That the Laird of Gilbertoun hath hied
To hunt upon these mountains gray.

As he came down the Caldron Brae,
He call'd unto his brave dog Colle,
Whaise tail was standing out as straight
As needle to the norland pole.

His ee was set, and his foot was up,
And his lip was clypping in the sloat,
And his head was on his shoulder turn'd;
It was a sight was worth ane groat.

"Hold on, brave boy," cried Gilbertoun;
The dog held on a little space,
Then he begoud to yuff and bark,
And terror strange was in his face.

" Hold on, brave boy," cries Gilbertoun.
" No, master brave; be yours the part;
There's something in that heather brown,
That frights me to the very heart."

He took his tail between his legs,
And up the Pen he ran with speed,
And aye he gave the tother yelp,
As one had smote him on the head.

" The dog 's bewitch'd," says Gilbertoun,
" Or else the devil is in that den;
It makes mine very heart to quake,
Yet what to dread I little ken."

He raised his dogheads bright and keen,
And on he held courageouslye;
Yet there was something in his eyne,
That halflins hinder'd him to see.

Then up there sprang a goodly brace,—
Two finer birds never beat the air;
Thump! thump! went Gilbertoun's two shots,
And down came both the comely pair.

" Seek dead, seek dead, mine brave dog Colle;
Come down, here 's gallant sport for thee."
" Thank you, sir master, seek yoursell,
For devil ane help you's get from me!"

The Laird held on, his birds to lift,
Such grand beginning blythe to see.
" Hold!—damme you, sir," says the moorcock;
" How dared you shotte your guns at me?"

The Laird got never sic a fleg,
Sin he sat on his mother's knee;
He flung his musket from his hand,
And like a madman off ran he.

But at the first bewilder'd turn
He came unto the Witch's den;
For she lived far up in the Caldron Burn,
Far from the walks of Christian men,

In half a house, and half a cave,—
It was a fearsome place to see;
But in ran the Laird of Gilbertoun,
As frighten'd as a man could be.

" Sir, keep your distance," cried the Wife;
" This day I speak not with your kind;
So come not hither for your life:
Go murder all whom you can find.

" You are such a base, unbridled knave,
I am in pain quhill you depart;
There's youthful blood upon your head,
And sin within your very heart."

Now this Witche was not a wither'd hag,—
She was a fair and lordly quean,
With majesty in every move,
And glamour in her coal black eyne.

" Most marvellous and stately dame,
That you are here astoundeth me,
That you should live in such a hame
Far passeth my capacitye.

" But hear and help me, if you may,
I'll shew you sights you never saw,—
Something hath fallen into my way
That far owerpasseth Nature's law."

" I know it all," cried the Witch Wife;
" Alas! I know it all too weel!
You have shot Tom Flemon of Blode-hope,
And bonny May of Fingland-sheill!

" Oh! they were lovers fond and leal,
And of each other's love so fain;
But they would sey the moors a while,
And dearly have they paid the kaine!

" Come, let us go to work of woe,
And lay their heads beneath the sod,
That never man their sin may know,
Nor ferlie ower their last abode!"

Then she took out a winding sheet,
Was whiter nor the drifted snow;
And they are away to the Caldron Brae,
To seek the lovers, lying low.

" Now keep you back," the Witch Wife said;
" Keep back until I call your name;
For it little suits the eye of man
To look on virgin's lifeless frame."

Oh! when she came unto the spot
It was a scene of rueful skaith;
For May of Fingland-sheill was slain,
And her lover weeping fast to death.

There never was such a comely corpse
Laid out so meekly and so low;
And her bonny skin was striped with blood,
Like rainbows on a wreath of snow.

They digg'd her grave by the wild burn side,
Far from the sight of mortal ee,—
"O, make it wide," Tom Flemon cried,
"That it may hold both her and me!"

They digg'd her grave, and laid her in,
And to dissuade her lover tried;
But Tom Flemon crept into the grave,
And laid himself down by her side.

He folded his dead love in his arms,
And laid his head upon her breast,—
"Now cover us up," Tom Flemon cried,
"For this is the bed I like the best!

" I have follow'd mine own dear virgin love
Through earth and air, alas! too fast!
But I never possess'd her quhill the grave
Hath given her to me at the last.

" Here will we lie in sweet sound sleep
Till the last morning open her ee,—
Then lay the green sod on our heads,
For this is where I love to be!"

They shovell'd the mould upon their feet,
And ower their breasts they shovell'd it in;
But loth were they to cover their heads
While there was any life within.

Then Tom Flemon took a long last kiss,
And he look'd to Heaven, and wept full sore,
Then closed his eyes, and bedded his head
Where it should lie for evermore.

Then they cover'd them up alive and dead,—
They cover'd them up just as they lay,—
Then laid the green sod on the head,
And soon the moanings died away.

And the Laird wept like a very child,
In sore distress and grief of mind;
But the Weird Wife, in passion wild,
Pour'd this wild anthem on the wind:

The Witch's Dirge.

Adieu! adieu!
Sweet spirits, adieu!
A kind farewell I send with you!
As fond and fair
As ever you were,
I see you pacing the fields of air!—
Away! away!
By the cloudlet gray,
And the hues that mingle the night and the day,
O'er valleys from which the dews descend,
Where the glaring sunbeams never blend,
But a gloaming dims the dell and river,
And a holy stillness dwells for ever;
Where the ruffling breeze
Never waves the trees,

And the waters neither swell nor freeze;
Where storms the soul can never harrow,
Nor terrors of the lightning's arrow,
Nor glances of delirious joy,
Without illusion or alloy;
But the lingering spirit's life is led,
In a dreary hope, and a holy dread,
Till the last day
Shall pass away,
Of hope, of longing, and dismay;
When the doom is read, that effaced is never,
And the fates of spirits seal'd for ever.

Adieu! adieu!
Sweet spirits, adieu!
A kind farewell I send with you,
To a land where I have lived approved—
A land where I have sinn'd and loved,
And thence was forced, to earth's domain,
To a body of flesh and blood again;
For thrice, as punishment condign,
Has this unyielding soul of mine
Been driven away, as being remiss,
From verges of the fields of bliss,

Downward—away o'er fire and flood,
To inherit mortal flesh and blood.
But here, above thy earthly shrine,
I pray such fate be never thine:
May you love and kiss,
In dreamy bliss,
In your home of slumbering quietness;
And sometimes, at the midnight noon,
Climb the steep eyebrows of the moon,
To watch her workings of commotion,
That heave the tides of the earthly ocean;
That torfel and roll her to and fro,
Like surges of death in the world below,
That call the mists to the fair moonshine,
And the fresh sweet showers from the fields of brine;
Then mark the workings of nature's strife,
When the infant tempest springs to life;
And how the bolts of burning levin
Are moulded in the forge of heaven;
And far in flaming vengeance hurl'd,
Away to world beyond world.

O, then, how sweet your walks to renew,
Where the angels of night distil the dew;

And sink to your sweet alcove again,
In that benignant, quiet reign,
Where roses twine,
With the eglantine,
In the fairy bowers that once were mine!
Adieu! adieu!
Sweet spirits, adieu!
A kind farewell I send with you!

But the best of my tale is yet to be,
For James Glendonnyng hath told it me,—
And the truth of James can never fail,—
And so hath Tom Beattie of Muckledale,
That a ghostly moorcock and moorhen
Still haunt the wilds of the Caldron Glen;
At them no pointer will turn his eye,
But hangs his tail, and passeth by;
And nothing availeth the strongest shot,
For it passeth through them, and hurteth not:
For both these blades, 'mongst other crimes,
Have shot at these ghosts a thousand times;
And cursed them well, without dismay,
For carrying their good shots away.

But everilk year, at Lammas tide,
On a green mound by the wild burn side,
May these two bonny birds be seen,
Sitting in sorrow and in tein.

FYTTE THE SECOND.

Now this Witch Wife, whose earthly name
Was never said in Fair Scotland,
Hath wiled the Laird into her hame,
By the might of her bewitching wand.

And she said she loved his bearing well,
Though at the first he held some dread,
That she studied some grand prank of hell,
And had revenge into her head.

She set him in an honour'd place,
And she told a tale to him, so new,
That, though it was said with queenly grace,
He scarcely could believe it true:

" Now listen to me, thou sportsman good,
As thou wert listening for thy life,
And I will thrill thy frigid blood
With marvellous tale of sturt and strife.

" And I must tell this tale to you,
For it would still life's stormy even,
If but one man on earth should know
The state that I stand in with heaven.

" About a thousand years agone,
I was a lady of renown;
I was my father's darling bairn,
My mother's love was all my own.

" But it was in a sinful land,
That lies beneath the rising sun,
Where the mighty Aral rolls her tide
On shores that free man never won;

" And when I won my youthful prime,
And loved with all a virgin's fears,
My father sold me for a slave,
Regardless of my cries and tears;

" He sold me to a mighty king,
To lead a life I could not lead;
For something whisper'd me within,
Such life can ne'er be virgin's meed.

" There's nought in life so sweet as love,
To love and be beloved again;
But to give all to one we hate,—
There wells the soul's deadliest pain.

" So I let out my lord's heart's blood,
Rather than my pure soul begrime;
For I rather chose to die a maid,
Than yield my life to hateful crime.

" I barr'd the doors and windows close,
I barr'd them all, myself within;
And to his harem set a flame,
And joy'd me of the deadly sin.

" Then all his wives and wicked dames,
They scream'd, they brainzelit, and they pray'd,
It was an awesome dance of death,
To all but one poor wronged maid.

" The wretches fled before the flame,
And to a chamber rush'd pell-mell,
Where eunuch, queen, and wicked dame,
Were burn'd unto an izel shell.

" My body perish'd in that flame,
But, to my wonder and delight,
I found I was a being still,
Pure as the snow on Aral's height;

" A lightsome, lively, living thing;
A thing without a form or name,
But all my energies remain'd,
And all my feelings were the same.

" I danced me o'er Marmora's isle,
I danced me o'er Marmora's sea,
Then lighted on a golden spire,
To watch what the event would be;

" And there I saw my wretched lord,
Who fain would have degraded me,
Borne off by three malevolent fiends
To everlasting slaverye.

" And his wives and minions pass'd in droves,
Away, away, to place unknown;
And the eunuchs snoolit up behind,
With woman still to lose or won.

" Some of those dames were black as ink,
And some of hues without a name,
But not a soul was white but mine;
Of all who perish'd in that flame.

" I hied me away to the Aral shore,
My parents and true love to see,
And saw my father rich in store
Of gain he got by sale of me;

" And I cursed him in my Maker's name,
And shook my hand before his ee.
But my hand was viewless as myself,—
My spirit he could not hear nor see;

" But my poor mother's heart was broke;
She sat and pined from morn till even,
And aye, as she named my name, she pray'd
For blessings on her child from Heaven:

'But we have given her up to shame,
And O what bliss can her betide?
But I'll go wailing to my grave,
That she was not a virtuous bride.

'My child, my love, mine only joy,
Dear to this heart as dear can be,
O we shall roll in burning fire,
For skaith that we have done to thee!'

"I look'd in my dear mother's face,
And saw the tears run down her cheek;
I saw the sobs that heaved her breast,
And then I thought my heart would break;

"But spirits have no hearts of flesh,
Else mine had broke without remede;
I tried her eye, I tried her ear,
But was not known by word or deed.

"I went to see mine own true love,
And found him at our trysting tree;
And he was crooning o'er a song
Of love, that he had made to me.

" I kiss'd his lips and comely cheek,
And in his manly bosom lay;
And, if a spirit could have wept,
I would have wept my life away.

" But up there came a buxom dame,
Whose face was right well known to me;
And all his love was lavish'd there,
Beneath my own beloved tree.

" Then fondest dalliance pass'd between,
While I stood by and lookit on;
I cursed them in the Virgin's name,
And wish'd my being turn'd to stone.

" Oh would the shameful sons of men
But think of friends who 're dead and gone,
And think, in secret deeds of sin,
That they are standing looking on!

" They durst not stoop to deeds profane,
If pondering on their friends enshrined;
The eyes of spirits looking on
Is dreadful to the human mind.

" I turn'd my face unto the heaven,
And to myself said grievously,
' I must go seek another home;
This is no resting place for me.'

" But a Spirit held me by the hand,
And did my bounding flight restrain:
' You must forgive, you must forgive,'
Said he, ' or heaven you'll never gain.'

' The heart that sold a child for gold,
The love that lasts but for a day;
Though I in burning flames be roll'd,
These curses I shall ne'er unsay.'

" The Spirit shook his golden hairs,
And said, out through aërial tears,
' Oh that unyielding soul of thine
Must penance do a thousand years!'

" Now I have roam'd o'er dismal spheres,
In darkling pleasure and in woe;
Have lived with Fairies and their feres,
Then dived into the depths below.

" Once to a lightsome land I won,
Where pleasure 'gan to master pain;
But there I loved, and there I sinn'd,
And was expell'd to earth again.

" I have lived in virgin, and in crone,
And storm'd in fierce virago's mind;
Lived like unearthly being lone,
But never gave birth to human kind.

" I am not human nor divine,
But far above frail flesh and blood:
For I have elemental power,
That never can be understood;

" For I can bid the storms rave loud,
And straight they rave alongst the heaven;
And I can bring the thunder cloud,
And swathe it round the fiery levin;

" And I can scale the eagle's nest,
And scare him from his eyry soon;
And I can wring his lordly neck,
Between the white cloud and the moon;

" And I can stop the solan's flight,
And bar him from his enterprize;
I with the raven can converse,
And tell him where his quarry lies;

" I can turn a man into a beast,
And give him horns of proper size;
A maid into a charming bird,
To frolic through the summer skies.—

" Wake, drowsy slumberer! wake in time!
Dare you my words and works despise,
Who am a mystery sublime,
A wonder underneath the skies?"

For this strange quean had foam'd and raved,
And waved her arms so fearfullye,
She never noted that the Laird
Was sound asleep as man could be,

Until he gave ane goodly snore,
That sounded like a postman's horn;
Then the Witch gave him such a fleg,
As he never got sin he was born;

She gave him a skivat on the cheek
That made him spring to the bauk tree;
"Hallo! what's this?" cries out the Laird;
"Dame, dare you play your pranks on me?

"I had good mind to ask your love,
For you are a lordly, lovesome dame;
But to let out your lord's heart's blood,
I trow it was a right great shame.

"Pray have you nothing here to drink?
In that are joys which never fail:
I would rather have some drink and fun,
Than list to an unearthly tale.

"Such tales as that I hope are few,
They make a man both sick and sad;
And, if one could believe them true,
They 're fit to put a body mad.

"Let us turn to earthly things again,
And first see what 's to drink or eat:
For, what with trouble, toil, and pain,
I have great need of rest and meat."

But what he ate, or what he drank,
Or where he slept that night his lane,
In sooth was never reveal'd to me;
Therefore I tell it not again.

FYTTE THE THIRD.

The bonny gray eye of the day
Had scarcely heaved its drowsy lid,
Far o'er the eastern hills away,
Through blushes of vermilion red,

When up got many a brave moorcock,
Grand human gorcocks of renown;
And they were nichering in the air,
As if the world was all their own.

While all that each had to the fore,
Was a sweet mate of russet hue;
Sitting gledging in her cozy nest,
Among the bells of purple blue.

The blackcock lockerit on the brae,
And spread his tail like silver fan;
His motley mate, in humble grey,
Came cowering to her proud goodman.

And up gat the Wife of Ezdel-more,
And the Laird of Gilbertoun up gat he;
For they heard some voices at the gate,
As sweet as voices well could be.

And when the Laird came but the cave,
From out his dark and drowsy den,
The grandest dame stood him before,
That ever was seen by eyne of men.

The Laird sank down upon his knee,
In perfect wonder and dismay;
But she raised him up right courteouslye,
And bade him neither do nor say.

Says she, "I'll shew to you a sight,
Will set your tinder heart on flame;
And then I'll shew another sight,
Will make you change your mortal frame."

" Confound me, madam, if I will,
For this I say full certainlye,
If ever I change my mortal frame,
That change it shall be made for thee."

But forth she sail'd unto the yett,
Like streamer of the rising sun;
When the bright weathergaw, bewet
With dews of heaven, was there outdone.

For there three lovely virgins stood,
Waiting to change their mortal frames;
For jealousy had them betray'd,
To risk the sinful mountain games.

But when they saw a gallant wight,
A gentleman of high respect,
Had been in madam's cove all night,
They blush'd unto the very neck.

They whisper'd, " That must be the Devil!"
But Mary Roy said pawkilye,
" Then he is much better than he's call'd—
I have seen few better chaps nor he.

" But be he man, or be he more,
Or be he worse than I can tell,
This lusty Wife of Ezdel-more
Is little better nor oursell.

" My heart it trembles me within,
Yet from my purpose I'll not fail,
For I must have my love again,
In spite of powder and of hail."

Then cried the Wife of Ezdel-more,
" Come one by one my bonnie things;
But when the clocking times are o'er,
Ye'll rue this raging after wings."

The first that came was Mary Roy,
With blushes of the rose's hue;
Her cheeks were dimpled ower wi' joy,
Her eyne of Heaven's own azure blue.

" Hold!" cried the Laird; " this shall not be—
Against this change I make a vow—
Though bonnier bird should never flee,
She's ten times sweeter as she's now.

" Give up the moors, my pretty maid,
And come and spend a month with me;
I'll clead you o'er, from toe to head,
In gold and silken cramasye."

But she threw him a witching blink,
And said, with pawkie languishing,
" The bonniest gown in all our land
Is one that's call'd the moorhen's wing."

The Wife took her ben to the cave,
And there were cries of mickle pain;
But what was done, or what was said,
No mortal ever told again.

But open flew the door at last,
And out there sprang, in nature new,
And bounded for the Black Coom height,
The bonniest moorhen ever flew.

The Laird ran on to ane knowe head,
To see where such a thing would light:
" Hah!" quoth the Laird, " I have her now—
I have her very bush in sight!"

The next fair dame that took the change,
Was Jane Deyelle of Borrancleuch;
She was a tall and sprightly lass,
With waving locks of raven hue.

The Laird he look'd intil her eyne,
Quhill she was forced to look away;
Thinking he would them know again,
When meeting on the mountain grey.

The third that came was Barbary Blake,
In robes of snawy whiteness clad;
And when the Laird look'd in her face,
Her beauty almost put him mad.

"Lord!" cried the Laird, "but this exceeds
All things that ever on earth befell,
This longing for the mountain heads,
And yearning for the heather bell!

"Ah, lovely maiden, if to me
So sweet, so fair a form were given,
I would not change its symmetry
Save for an angel's of the heaven.

" Swith! rather stay at home, and breed
Fair human things, with human souls,
Than nourish yauping pouts, to feed
The greedy gleds and gairly fowls!"

" 'Tis not for bread—'tis not for feed,"
Said the fair maid, " that I go forth;
'Tis all for love! 'tis all for love!
But that, this world is little worth:

" For my true love hath taen the glens;
And if he is, as I dread sore,
As great a devil amang moorhens,
As women, I'll see him no more.

" So I must change this mortal frame,
But not the soul within that dwells;
For that will give me joy and aim,
As shimmering o'er the firths and fells."

The Wife takes her far ben the cave;
The Laird he chuckles, jumps, and flings;
And tried the powers of his two arms,
Wauffing them as they had been wings.

For he was more nor half resolved
To have a change, and wing the air,
And touzel with these lovely things
Amang the purple blossoms rare.

And aye he wauffit his arms about,
How they would do for wings, to try;
And aye he gave a loud guffaw,
Thinking the maidens to outfly.

Then out came bonnie Barbary Blaike,
A spreckled lark so sweet to see:
"Good bye, Sir Laird," she merrily cried;
"Now come and mount the heavens with me!"

The Laird he ran to the knowe head,
To see where that sweet bird would flee.—
"Och, change me, change me," quoth the Laird,
"Or I for downright love must dee."

The Wife took him far ben the cave,
And sore he rair'd, with torment slow;
But all that she could make of him,
Was an unseemly hoody crow.

Then that grousome bird was sore in rage,
And cursed the Wife both but and ben;
For he would be a cock laverocke,
To follow that bewitching hen.

Then the Wife she took the Laird's good gun,
And held it at him with her hand;
Lord, how he skraigh'd, and fled for life!
For that was more than crow could stand.

Then the Laird he took his lonely flight,
Lamenting sore his aspect grim;
For neither laverock, rook, nor crow,
Nor sweet moorhen would mell with him.

At his approach the hoodies fled,
The rook but and the corbie crow;
The falcon and the greedy gled,
Flew, half demented, to and fro.

The lordly eagle left the cliff,—
His heart got never sic a stoun,—
And yell'd his terror yont the lift,
For the black Laird of Gilbertoun.

But, had you seen the blue herone,
As she sat capering at the stream,
You would have laugh'd till you fell down,
To have seen her look, and heard her scream!

She knotted her thropple like ane purse,
And spread her yellow trams behind;
And, rearding, screw'd the firmament,
To the top storeys of the wind.

I have been west, I have been east,
And o'er the Border mountains blue;
But I never saw as daft like beast,
As ane o'erfrighten'd heronshew.

But, oh! the lovely, spreckled lark
Was teased and persecuted so,
That, night and day, he follow'd her,
This vylde, voluptuous hoodie crow.

The sweet moorhens they jink'd and jeer'd,
And would not let him once come near;
Quhill bitterly he cursed and swear'd,
And call'd them names ane shame to hear.

Now this crow he proved a lonely bird,
For he held no converse with his kind,
For the moorhens laugh'd him sore to scorn,
And their lovers dabbed him nearly blind.

But the moorhens tired of the moors,
And one by one came home their ways;
But they all had feathers on their toes
And limbs, until their dying days.

But the Laird remain'd. Though many a day
At the grand Witch's door he pray'd,
She only shoo'd the bird away,
And with the gun his heart dismay'd.

"Begone!" she cried, "and take the bent;
'Tis meet that you a crow remain:
For evil was your heart's intent,
And black mischief your whole design.

"And you shall roam a hateful bird,
And feed on garbage ear' and late,
Until the lark of your dear love
Shall sing you into man's estate."

Then the poor crow's heart was like to break,
And the tears ran o'er his coal-black chin,
And aye he cursed his amorous heart,
That led him on to deadly sin:

"Oh woman's love! Oh woman's love!
What griefs to man it hath brought down!
But never was man so hard bested,
As the poor Laird of Gilbertoun.

"Now I, to feed my lordly gambs,
Must daily warstle with the wind;
To pike the eyne of poor dead lambs,
Or houk the haslet of the hind;

"Or maybe of a bursten frog
To make my supper, on the heath:
But the flesh or bones of ane moorcock
I'll never pike while I have breath.

"Now I have lost my forests dark,
My halls, and herds, and fields of corn,
And I have lost my lovely lark,
The bonniest bird that e'er was born!

" But I will seek her yont the sky,
And o'er the fell, and by the sea;
And I will cower beneath her eye,
And beg that she will pity me."

Oh! who could have thought that woeful bird,
As whaisking over craig and linn,
Could have had reason at his heart,
But and a living soul within!

But there are things of spell and power,
That never were known, and never will be,
Save to the Wife of Ezdel-more,
The Laird of Gilbertoun, and me.

FYTTE THE FOURTH.

THERE was ane crow sat on a stone,
On Gilbertoun west gavel graide;
But it flew away, and there was none:
Sure such a bird was never made!

For that crow it spoke the words of men,
It spoke the words that women knew,
And it croon'd a song of moorland glen,
That no one could believe was true.

And men and women fled for fright,
And creepit in holes and bores amain;
And messans yowl'd, and lordly grews
Glymed in amaze, for want of brain;

And the cocks and hens ran to ane hole;
The gainders raised a piteous wail:
But the lost Laird's brave pointer, Colle,
Crept towards the crow, and waggit his tail.

But the auld Lady of Gilbertoun
Came louting twofold o'er a rung;
"What bird is this?" the Lady cried,
"That sings to me with earthly tongue?"

"Oh I'm a sinful, sorrowful bird;
The curse of heaven is on my head,
For I, by guilty thoughts, was lured,
My Maker's image to degrade.

" Yet still I love the human race,
And I can sorrow for their sin;
And I have hopes of Heaven's grace,
And an immortal soul within.

" O mother dear, or I was born,
I have heard you tell with fear and woe,
You dream'd you was in childbed laid,
And bore a hateful hoodie crow.

" And so you did,—I am your son,
Foredoom'd to be this creature low;
I wish'd to be a tuneful lark,
But turn'd a piteous hoodie crow.

" What shall I say, what shall I do?
A mother's prayers may much avail;
A mother's love may yet subdue
This sinful spell which I bewail.

" A lovely bird that far hath flown,—
And you must find her if you can,—
She has the power, and she alone,
To turn me to a mortal man."

The Lady raised her haggard face,
Her senses all benumb'd and gone,
" What says the beast? for, be God's grace,
My heart is turn'd into a stone!

" This is some horrid thing, bewitch'd;
Get all your guns and shoot it dead!
I will give that man an hundred merks,
Who brings to me its illfaur'd head."

Then the crow he thought it time to flit,
For gunshots were his mortal dread;
But the great big tears ran down his cheeks,
As round and clear as draps of lead.

But word's gone east, and word's gone west,
That these dark deeds of glamourye,
By the dreadful Wife of Ezdel-more,
Would ruin all the South Countrye.

Then priest and peasant kiss'd the rood,
And said their *aves* o'er and o'er;
For all the land was in fear and dread,
For the powerful Wife of Ezdel-more.

But it happen'd on a lovely morn,
When May had all her blossoms set,
That there rose a laverock from the corn,
And mounted to the morning's yett;

And no one kenn'd whence she had flown,
Quhill they heard its melling strains above;
And it sail'd on the clouds of eider down,
And it sang of heavenly love.

That bonny bird's sang, it was so sweet,
As it melted from the sky,
That the owsen low'd outower their meat,
Charm'd with the melody.

And the horses knelt within the stall,
All quivering with delight;
The gamesome lambs forgot their play,
And lookit to heaven's height.

And all the birds in the green forest,
Came posting through the air:
It was like a bridal of boundless love,
For the lieges of heaven were there.

The bleater came bumping from the moss;
The stynte, and the grey curlew;
And the plover came, in his corslet black,
But he durst not give ane whew.

And the peaseweip cockit her crest of blue,
As high as it would rear;
And the miresnipe came, in his rokelay new,
To see what was asteer.

And the merlin hang in the middle air,
With his little wings outspread,
As if let down from the heavens there,
By a viewless silken thread.

And Sandy the piper left the brook,
And the ouzel his glitty stone;
And robin left the greenwood nook,
Though the bush was all his own.

From bank, and brae, and greenwood bush,
All round fair Gilbertoun,
That morn there was neither hish nor whush,
But the laverock's song alone.

Oh, I would have given, what would I not,
To have heard that heavenly lay;
For the strain from second hand ygotte
Is bereft of its magic sway.

But aye the burden of the song,
If the truth to me was given,
Was of sweet repentance on the earth,
And forgiveness from the heaven.

But I may not sing, I dare not sing,
That strain of heavenly grace;
For in an old wife's tale like mine,
It would sore be out of place.

But among the birds, a hoodie crow
Sat high on the old rowntree;
Who hang his head in doleful wise,
And ane mournful bird was he.

And aye he turn'd up his wat'ry eyne,
With heavy sigh and groan;
As if the sang were made for him,
And were made for him alone.

And the tears ran down his duffy cheeks,
Aye as the bonny bird sung;
And he shook his doby head, and pray'd
Some words in human tongue.

But thresher John, he heard these words,
And a right blythe man was he;
For he counted on the hundred merks
That were offer'd by his Ladye.

And he has gone up to the end window,
That look'd to the auld rowntree;
And he hath let fly at the poor hoodie crow,
When down to the ground fell he.

"Faith, take thou that!" quod thresher John,
"Thou creature of warlockrye;
Thy head is worth an hundred merks
To my auld wife and me."

But when that crow fell from the tree,
He gave such a fearful cry,
That rang from the greenwood to the cloud,
And bobbit against the sky.

And the little wee seraph left the cloud
On the eebrow of the day;
And a strain of loud lament was heard
Far through the heavens away.

And all the birds of the good greenwood
Of the moor but and the dale,
They follow'd away by the self-same road,
With a deep and piteous wail.

But thresher John came down the stair,
Chanting this merry song,—
" My Lady may now draw out her purse,
For I'll make its neck full long.

" And it's hey for my gun, and my good auld gun,
She's the queen of the deadly play!
For an hundred merks, by an old barnman,
Is not won everilk day."

So John 's away round to the auld rowntree,
His gallant prize to bring;
But the hoodie raised two eyes to him,
Like an unearthly thing.

It was a look John could not thole,
And his prize he dared not take;
For it shook him to the very soul,
And made all his heart to quake.

"God's curse on you!" quod the hoodie crow—
"Do you know what you have done?
You have slain a soul and body both,
And your sand of life is run."

John ran for life, he knew not whither,
Through terror and through pain;
And he never loot one scraugh bide another,
Quhill he fell on his own hearth-stane.

And he hath told such a strange mix'd tale,
Of mirth and of mysterye,
That all the menzie, and their old dames,
Ran out this crow to see.

But when they came to the rowntree green,
With crosier and with rood,
There lay the Laird of Gilbertoun,
A-weltering in his blood.

" Oh, who has done this ruthless deed,
My dear son, tell to me ?"
" It was thresher John," the Laird replied,
And streikit him down to dee.

And he never spoke another word,
But three times kiss'd the rood;
And turn'd a sorrowful ee to heaven,
Which would be understood.

And they buried him in the rowntree green,
Beneath the auld rowntree;
For they durst not take him to Mary's Kirk,
That martyr to witcherye.

So this is plain, let women or men,
Through life, be what they may,
Death brings them to themselves again,
To evil or good for aye.

May this be a warning to all young men
That sport in the moorland fells,
To beware of the sleek and bonny moorhen
That lurks in the heather bells.

And, oh, to beware of the sweet, sweet bird,
Whose notes gar the heart-strings play;
And, most of all, when her voice is heard
By her lane in the gloaming grey.

But what hath become of poor thresher John?
Oh, nothing of much avail;
For they hangit him on the auld rowntree,—
Which endeth my grievous tale.

ROBIN REID.

FYTTE THE FIRST.

Did you never hear of Robin Reid,
A strange, unchancy boy,
Who, from the day that he was born,
In mind had some alloy?

Yet he was foremost at the leap,
And foremost at the race,
And, when a boy contrary proved,
He smote him on the face.

Yes, he would go without one gleam
Of passion in his head,
And beat his haffets black and blue,
And make his nose to bleed.

Then he would turn and croon a song,
Or putt ane muckle stone,
Or fly to any blythsome play,
As nothing had been done.

And he could tell of Wallace wight,
And Robin Bruce the good,
Of Will Scarlet and Little John,
And of bold Robin Hood,

Of Adam Bell, and Clym of the Cleuch,
And William of Cloudeslee,
Who were three archers good eneugh,
The best in the South Countrye.

Then he with every boy would fight,
With staff but and with steel,
And those who held not fair defence,
He made their crowns to feel.

And he could bend a right strong bow,
And aim with a steady eye,
And bring a crow down from the lift,
When many crows went by.

Yet, at the tryst or weaponshaw,
So simple was his mien,
That all men took him for a fool,
The greatest ever was seen.

But Lord Douglas has raised the Jedd Forest,
And the lads of Liddesdale,
To meet Lord Scrope on the Dyrdan waste,
To settle the Border maill;

And Robin Reid, among the rest,
Went forth as a beholder,
With good strong bow across his back,
And sword outower his shoulder.

His doublet was the good buck's hide,—
A goodly frock to see!—
And his breeks from the back of the good black ox,
As strong as they could be.

He had no buskins on his feet,
Nor bonnet on his head;
And all the troopers held their sides,
And laugh'd at Robin Reid.

But aye he loutch'd and trudged along,
Skipping o'er hagg and heugh;
And sometimes he would croon a song,
Or whistle ane whilly-whew.

And the English came to the Dyrdan waste,
All marching rank and file,—
The Tynedale lads, and the Bewcastle lads,
And the gentles of Merry Carlisle.

Then there was boozing on the bent,
And aye the mirth grew louder,
For they drank to the health of James Stuart,
And eke of Harry Tudor.

And all was amity and peace,
No soldering there to make;
But the English laugh'd at Robin Reid,
Quhill their fat sides did shake.

Then there was joust and tournament,
But the Scots won every ploy;
While Robin stood and lookit on,
And clappit his hands for joy.

But when the bowmen took their turn,
The Scots were sore outdone,—
At every flight they were o'ershot;
Yet the butt was never won.

Then Robin bent his good old bow,—
A better was never strung,—
And he drew an arrow from his belt,
And away his sword he flung.

But when he bit his beardless lip,
And 'gan his strength to strain,
And the wind blew up his bowzelly head,
The English roar'd amain.

"Restrain your mirth," says Lord John Scrope,
"An't were but for courtesye;
If that clown cannot his shaft direct,
He sore deceiveth me."

Then Robin set his legs asparr,
And he winkit with his ee,
And drew the bowstring till his ear,
And a steady aim took he.

The bow play'd twang, like smithy clang;
Such yerk ne'er stunn'd the ear,—
It made the English loons to start
With wonder and with fear.

The arrow took a gentle rise,—
The arch of most avail,—
Like rainbow at the hour of noon
When the shower is in the dale;

And through the bullock's ee it went,
Within the outer ring,
And pierced the solid mass behind
Down to the gray goose wing.

The watcher twirl'd his cap on high,
And catch'd it as it fell.
"Well shot, young hind!" cried Lord John Scrope;
"Thy bow becomes thee well.

"I'll back thy skill—sey it again
With shaft the very same,
Lest men may say it was but chance,
And not thy goodly aim."

He shot again,—the arrow flew
With swiftness manifold;
But of its path out through the air
The eye could not keep hold.

The watcher twirl'd his cap on high,
And catch'd it catches three.
"The Lord forbid!" cried Lord John Scrope,
"That thou shouldst shoot at me!"

He knew the sign,—it told him plain,
As plain as tongue could say,
That right out through the bullock's ee
The shaft had found its way.

Then every bow was soon unbent,—
To yield it all were fain,—
And straight unto the butt they went;
For none would shoot again.

"Now, my good Lords," the watcher said,
"I have been watcher here,
And at the target stood the judge
For three-and-thretty year;

" But such two shots as these two last
Mine eyes did never see.
If he was not the devil who sent the shafts,
A master hand is he;"

For there the two brave arrows stuck
Sunk to the gray goose wing,
And the last had split the first in twain,
A most unearthly thing!

" Tell me thy name," says Lord John Scrope,
" Thou most uncourtly hind;
For, with my good Lord Douglas' leave,
To thee I have a mind."

" My name," said he, " is Robin Reid,—
I think no shame to tell;
My father was daft, my mother was keude,
And I'm hardly right mysell!

" But what's withheld from me in wit
In strength of arm is given,
For I will not yield to any wight
That breathes beneath the Heaven!"

" What's this I hear!" said Lord John Scrope;
" May I my senses trow,
That such a loon as that hath lear,
And matchless vigour too?

" Then Reid it is an English name,
Of brave Northumberland;
Therefore I claim the hind as mine,
And join him to my band."

" Take him, my Lord," the Douglas said,
" On that we shall agree;
He is liker to ane beggarly fool,
Than warrior meet for me."

Then Robin Reid he hang his head,
And the tear was in his ee,—
Says he, " Lord Douglas, thou shalt rue
The parting thus with me.

" But if there's one in all your train
Dares try me at one thing,
I throw my gage—choose he the play,
And turn him to the ring;

Out steppit Jock Dickson, of Haike-sheill,
A wrestler bold and vain,
" If thou thraws me," Jock Dickson said,
" I never shall rise again."

The stripling seized him by the neck,
His right hand swinging out,
Then brought his head before his breast,
And fauldit him like a clout.

" Damn you," says Jock; " that was not fair,—
A quirk befitting you;
Stand as I stand, thus, breast to breast,
And grip as I grip, too."

Poor Robin did as he was bid;
He no objections made,
But set his feet as Jock set his,
And for the onset staid.

Jock made a broostle and a trip,
With might and majesty;
But Robin brought his back to bear,
Then heaved him up on high.

And away he ran from out the ring,
With base and wicked speed,
And in a great and fearsome pool,
He jawit him o'er the head.

"Now take thou that," said Robin Reid,
"To cool thy courage true!"
Then put his hands behind his back,
And whistled ane whilly-whew.

Jock Dickson then was sorely snool'd;
The play was ower with him;
He wrung his dudds, and shook his lugs,
And shiver'd every limb.

Now Robin Reid the sport had spoil'd;
Not one would take the ring,
Nor try that wild unearthly child,
For any earthly thing.

So he is gone away with Lord John Scrope,
His motley fool to be;
And when next you hear of Robin Reid,
You will wonder more than me.

FYTTE THE SECOND.

THE great St Edmond's fair comes on,
And England's all on stir;
For all are there, from lady fair
To vyldest pilferer;

And priests and prelates, wives and bairns,
And captains of renown,
And cowled monks, and troopers stern,
All crowding round the town.

Into a splendid tent there sat
Two youths and maidens fine,
Chatting and wooing pleasantly,
And quaffing blood-red wine.

In came a champion trooper, stern,
With lady of that town;
"Make room," he cried; "get hence, you trash!"
And dang their table down.

The wine was spilt, the glasses broke,
The maidens scream'd outright;
" Sir, what means this ?" the youths replied;
" We did you no despite."

He cursed the youths, and he kicked the youths,
Quhill all their bones were sore;
And then he took them by the necks,
And flang them from the door.

And then the madam of the town,
She giggled and she mumbled,
She was so proud of her brave knight,
Who had two bumpkins pummel'd.

The champion spoke in lofty phrase,
And caper'd mightilye,
That no man could compare with him,
Was plain as plain could be.

But there sat a grousy monk behind,
With coif upon his head,
And he was smacking at the sack,
And knolling up the bread.

The trooper popp'd the bedesman's cowl
Back o'er his burly neck:
" Some manners, monk; if not for me,
For ladies have respect."

The monk came slouching round about
To the champion and his dear,
" Make room," cried he, " get hence, you trash!
What garbage have we here?"

Then, with the staff into his hand,
He swept the table clean,
And struck the trooper 'cross the neck,
Till fire flew from his eyne.

" Monk, I'll give thee such chastisement,
As monk got ne'er before;
Thy sackcloth frock, and motley cowl,
Shall thee protect no more."

" I know it well," the monk replied;
" But by St George's head,
I am resolved, with such a knave,
To fight quhill I be dead!"

Then he pull'd off his scallop'd hood,
And roll'd it round his hand,
Then brandish'd his unseemly bat,
Against the trooper's brand.

Then all the fair they gather'd round,
In thousands, to the fray,
And the foremost man was Lord John Scrope,
To see fair room and play.

And there were the youths and maidens too,
Who from the tent were driven,
And that the monk might maul the knave,
They sent their prayers to Heaven.

The fight began with deadly feud,
With flourish and with knell;
And aye the monk's unfarrant kent
Made all the falchion yell.

In cheering on the gallant monk,
A thousand shouts combine.
" Sir, save your head," the monk replied,
" Or make a slap at mine."

The trooper gave a horrid slash,
To cleave the bedesman down,
Who parried it without dismay,
And crack'd him o'er the crown.

The champion jumpit from the ground,
With a convulsive strain;
Then dropt his sword, and down he fell,—
His skull was splette in twain.

And there he lay, and spurr'd the gerse,
Chacking his teeth full sore,
But never closed his dim, set ee,
Nor word spake ever more.

Then shoulder-high they heaved the monk,
And bure him through the town,
Shouting, and lauding, as they went,
The monk's supreme renown.

Some said he was a lord disguised,
One famed for noble deed;
But others said he was the deil,
Or else daft Robin Reid.

Lord Scrope then took him by the hand,
And led him from the fray,
Saying, he should be ane captain soon,
And cast the cowl away.

About that brave and manly monk,
A mighty stir was made;
But they never could hear of him again,
Either alive or dead.

FYTTE THIRD.

One year there comes to Newcastle
A Frenchman of renown,
Who teached lords and knights to fence—
Such man was never known:

For he had jinks, and wheels, and airs,
That dazzled all men's sight,
And then he twirl'd their foils on high,
So wondrous was his sleight.

But all his quirks and sleighty deeds
Unto this land were new;
For he could spring outower folk's heads,
And fell them as he flew.

Then there was publish'd, through the realm,
One great appointed day,
When he and all his pupils grand
Their valour should display.

Oh, it was rare! such deeds of weir
Never entranced the view!
So ladies said, and nobles sware,
So it must have been true.

There was a noble challenge given,
Daring all Britain's isle;
And seven times it was proclaim'd
At cross and at kirkstile.

But good Lord Piercy got a hint,
From one that knew full well;
Says he, "Sir Master, I had mind
To have sey'd your skill mysell;

" But that I deem'd it trifling play,
Which common might may stand;
Therefore, the lowest hind I have
Shall fight you hand to hand."

" I have thrown my gage," the Master said,
" To play with lord or knight;
I dare all Britain's noble blood;
With hind I will not fight."

" Nay, you have braved all Britain broad,
And shall not now recede;
So with the lowest we'll begin,
And rise as we see need.

" Get up, you great and awkward cuif,
And fight that foreign man!
Hold up your head, and take the foil,
And beat him if you can."

Then up there stepp'd upon the stage
A most uncourtly wight;
The shouts rang to the very skies,
At such a glorious sight.

He had no sandals on his feet,
Nor bonnet on his head,
And duddy was his doublet green,
And his bluff cheeks were red.

" My noble lord, this is too bad,"
The Master then did say;
" But, if this mockery be your will,
'Tis meet that I obey.

" But can I beat that silly lout,
As I would foil a knight,
Or is this any sport to play
In noble ladies' sight?"

" Nay, knab him well," Lord Piercy said,—
" Lay on with heavy hand;
There is not one will less be miss'd,
In all Northumberland.

" Come, my brave nolt-herd, take the foil,
Thou stupidest of men;
And if that Frenchman be thy deid,
What will my stotts do then?"

The Master wheel'd, and wheel'd again,
That ladies might adore,
Round also wheel'd the awkward hind,
Which sport gave ten times more.

But when they met on middle stage,
He set his frame so tight,
That all the thousands held their breath,
Marvelling at such a sight.

One, two, three hits, were counted straight,
Against the Frenchman's skill,
But not one hit his art could get,
Though aim'd with right good will.

The arm it was so long and strong,
Of that unsightly clown,
He drove the Master to the rails,
And then he knock'd him down.

Then all the lists with shouts were fill'd,
Quhill the broad lift did rend:
The clown drew up his breeks, and trudged
Unto the other end.

And first he whistled ane whilly-whew,
Quhill louder plaudits rung,
And then shot out his nether lip,
And to himself he sung :—

" *Fortes Fortuna juvat,*
Shall aye be Robin's song;
Fœnum habet in cornu,
They'll say of him ere long.

" Some say you are possess'd, Robin,
Some say you are the deil,
But clinkum clankum is the sport
That Robin loves full weel."

The Master rose, but stagger'd sore,
As resting on one knee,
Then to the railing hard he clung;
'Twas marvellous to see.

Then slowly came up to the clown,
With face all pale and wan,
" I yield you up my sword," said he,
" Which I ne'er did to man.

" If you are not the devil himself,
In which case I resign,
I pray thee yield me up thy name,
In fair exchange for mine."

" My name," said he, " is Robin Reid,
" I think no shame to tell;
My father was daft, my mother was keude,
And I'm hardly right mysell.

" But what is withheld from me in wit,
In might of arm is given,
For I will not yield to any man,
That breathes beneath the heaven.

" For I have a knowledge at my heart,
From where I cannot tell,
That I am double—I'm Rob Reid,
And I'm beside mysell."

The Master spread his hands to heaven,
Signing the cross with speed,—
" Heavens! have I dared the dreadful deed,
To fight daft Robin Reid!

" Then I am gone! for it was known,
Before I saw the light,
That ane mad wight of fair Scotland
Should beat me in the fight,

" And all my honours and my life,
Reave at a single blow.
Oh, I am gone!" And down he fell,
And roll'd him to and fro.

Then lay he streikit upon his back,
Trying to guard his head,
And with passado, lunge, and fence,
He fought quhill he was dead.

There was no tournament or sport,
Through England, at that day,
From which some strange outlandish wight,
Bore not the prize away.

A miller won, at Shrewsbury,
The prize in gallant style;
A tailor, with his steel-ellwand,
The justs at Merry Carlisle.

A blacksmith, with his apron on,
With coom all black and brown,
Enter'd the lists before King James,
At his great Langholm town.

Lord Douglas was the champion there,
And every knight bore down,
Lut the blacksmith met him hand to hand,
And crackit him ower the crown.

King James he laugh'd, quhill from his steed
Upon the ground fell he;
For well he loved, humbled to earth,
His nobles' pride to see.

Says he, "An earldom I would give,
An that bold loun were mine!"
Then sent he for the burly smith,
To make him a propine.

But some one whisper'd him to spare
His proffer and his meed,
For that he was a knave possess'd,
Whom men call'd Robin Reid;

That every man he tried he beat,
  That every prize he won,
And every man he fought he kill'd,
  As he that day had done.

" I'll give him work," King James replied,—
  " To kill my nobles all,
For they're so proud, that they will fight,
  And, fighting, they will fall.

" Oh, it would joy my heart to see
  A hero in disguise
Lay every one of them as low
  As proud Lord Douglas lies!

" For they are tyrants, void of ruth,
  Of loyalty, and faith,
And oft have grieved me to the heart,
  For my poor people's skaith.

" Bring me the wight; I'll change his name,
  And have some glorious glee;
For if these knaves not humbled are,
  The Devil may reign for me!"

So Robin Reid is gone with speed,
A royal page to be;
And when you next hear of his tricks,
You will wonder more than me.

ELEN OF REIGH.

Have you never heard of Elen of Reigh,
The fairest flower of the North Countrie?
The maid that left all maidens behind,
In all that was lovely, sweet, and kind:
As sweet as the breeze o'er beds of balm,
As happy and gay as the gamesome lamb,
As light as the feather that dances on high,
As blith as the lark in the breast of the sky,
As modest as young rose that blossoms too soon,
As mild as the breeze on a morning of June;
Her voice was the music's softest key,
And her form the comeliest symmetry.

But let bard describe her smile who can,
For that is beyond the power of man;

There never was pen that hand could frame,
Nor tongue that falter'd at maiden's name,
Could once a distant tint convey
Of its lovely and benignant ray.
You have seen the morning's folding vest
Hang dense and pale upon the east,
As if an angel's hand had strewn
The dawning's couch with the eider down,
And shrouded with a curtain gray
The cradle of the infant day?
And 'mid this orient dense and pale,
Through one small window of the veil,
You have seen the sun's first radiant hue
Lightening the dells and vales of dew,
With smile that seem'd through glory's rim
From dwellings of the cherubim;
And you have thought, with holy awe,
A lovelier sight you never saw,
Scorning the heart who dared to doubt it?
Alas! you little knew about it!
At beauty's shrine you ne'er have knelt,
Nor felt the flame that I have felt;
Nor chanced the virgin smile to see
Of beauty's model, Elen of Reigh!

When sunbeams on the river blaze,
You on its glory scarce can gaze;
But when the moon's delirious beam,
In giddy splendour woos the stream,
Its mellow'd light is so refined,
'Tis like a gleam of soul and mind;
Its gentle ripple glittering by,
Like twinkle of a maiden's eye;
While, all amazed at heaven's steepness,
You gaze into its liquid deepness,
And see some beauties that excel—
Visions to dream of, not to tell—
A downward soul of living hue,
So mild, so modest, and so blue!

What am I raving of just now?
Forsooth, I scarce can say to you—
A moonlight river beaming by,
Or holy depth of virgin's eye;
Unconscious bard! what perilous dreaming!
Is nought on earth to thee beseeming,
Will nothing serve, but beauteous women?—
No, nothing else. But 'tis strange to me,
If you never heard aught of Elen of Reigh.

But whenever you breathe the breeze of balm,
Or smile at the frolics of the lamb,
Or watch the stream by the light of the moon,
Or weep for the rosebud that opes too soon,
Or when any beauty of this creation
Moves your delight or admiration,
You then may try, whatever it be,
That to compare with Elen of Reigh:
But never presume that lovely creature
Once to compare with aught in nature;
For earth has neither form nor face
Which heart can ween or eye can trace,
That once comparison can stand
With Elen, the flower of fair Scotland.

'Tis said that angels are passing fair
And lovely beings: I hope they are:
But for all their beauty of form and wing,
If lovelier than the maid I sing,
They needs must be — I cannot tell —
Something beyond all parallel;
Something admitted, not believed,
Which heart of man had ne'er conceived;

But these are beings of mental bliss,
Not things to love, and soothe, and kiss.—
There is something dear, say as we will,
In winsome human nature still.

Elen of Reigh was the flower of our wild,
Elen of Reigh was an only child,
A motherless lamb, in childhood thrown
On bounteous Nature, and her alone;
But who can mould like that mighty dame
The mind of fervour and mounting flame,
The mind that beams with a glow intense
For fair and virtuous excellence!
Not one! though many a mighty name,
High margin'd on the lists of fame,
Has blazon'd her ripe tuition high,—
The world has own'd it, and well may I!
But most of all that right had she,
The flower of our mountains, fair Elen of Reigh.

But human life is like a river—
Its brightness lasts not on for ever—
That dances from its native braes,
As pure as maidhood's early days;

But soon, with dark and sullen motion,
It rolls into its funeral ocean,
And those whose currents are the slightest,
And shortest run, are aye the brightest:
So is our life—its latest wave
Rolls dark and solemn to the grave;
And soon o'ercast was Elen's day,
And changed, as must my sportive lay.

When beauty is in its rosy prime,
There is something sacred and sublime,
To see all living worth combined
In such a lovely being's mind;
Each thing for which we would wish to live,
Each grace, each virtue Heaven can give.
Such being was Elen, if such can be;
A faith unstain'd, a conscience free,
Pure Christian love and charity,—
All breath'd in such a holy strain,
The hearts of men could not refrain
From wonder at what they heard and saw;
Even greatest sinners stood in awe,
At seeing a form and soul unshadow'd—
A model for the walks of maidhood.

You will feel a trembling wish to know,
If such a being could e'er forego
Her onward path of heavenly aim,
To love a thing of mortal frame.
Ah! never did heart in bosom dwell,
That loved so warmly and so well,
Or with such ligaments profound
Was twined another's heart around!
But blush not—dread not, I entreat,
Nor tremble for a thing so sweet.

Not comely youth, with downy chin,
Nor manhood's goodlier form, could win
One wistful look, or dewdrop sheen,
From eye so heavenly and serene.
Her love, that with her life began,
Was set on thing more pure than man—
'Twas on a virgin, of like mind,
As pure, as gentle, as refined;
They in one cradle slept when young,
Were taught by the same blessed tongue,
Aye smiled each other's face to see,
Were nursed upon the self-same knee,

And the first word each tongue could frame
Was a loved playmate's cheering name.

Like two young poplars of the vale,
Like two young twin roes of the dale,
They grew; and life had no alloy—
Their fairy path was all of joy.
They danced, they sung, they play'd, they roved,
And Oh, how dearly as they loved!
While in that love, with reverence due,
Their God and their Redeemer too
Were twined,—which made it the sincerer,
And still the holier and the dearer.

Each morning, when they woke from sleep,
They kneel'd, and pray'd with reverence deep;
Then raised their sightly forms so trim,
And sung their little morning hymn.

Then, tripping joyfully and bland,
They to the school went, hand in hand;
Came home as blithsome and as bright,
And slept in other's arms each night.

Sure in such sacred bonds to live,
Nature has nothing more to give.
So loved they on, and still more dear,
From day to day, from year to year;
And when their flexile forms began
To take the mould so loved by man,
They blush'd—embraced each other less,
And wept at their own loveliness,
As if their bliss were overcast,
And days of feelings pure were past.

But who can fathom or reprove
The counsels of the God of love,
Or stay the mighty hand of Him
Who dwells between the cherubim?
No man nor angel: all must be
Submiss to his supreme decree.
And so it happ'd that this fair maid,
In all her virgin charms array'd,
Just when upon the verge she stood
Of bright and seemly womanhood,
From this fair world was call'd away,
In mildest and in gentlest way,—

Fair world indeed; but still akin
To much of sorrow and of sin.

Poor Elen watch'd the parting strife
Of her she loved far more than life;
The placid smile that strove to tell
To her beloved that all was well.
Oh many a holy thing they said,
And many a prayer together pray'd,
And many a hymn, both morn and even,
Was breathed upon the breeze of heaven,
Which Hope, on wings of sacred love,
Presented at the gates above.

The last words into either melt,
The last squeeze of the hand is felt,
And the last breathings, long apart,
Like aspirations of the heart,
Told Elen that she now was left,
A thing of love and joy bereft—
A sapling from its parent torn,
A rose upon a widow'd thorn,
A twin roe, or bewilder'd lamb,
Reft both of sister and of dam—

How could she weather out the strife
And sorrows of this mortal life!

The last rites of funereal gloom,—
The pageant heralds of the tomb,
That more in form than feeling tell
The sorrows of the last farewell,—
Are all observed with decent care,
And but one soul of grief was there.
The virgin mould, so mild and meet,
Is roll'd up in its winding sheet;
Affection's yearnings form'd the rest,
The dead rose rustles on the breast,
The wrists are bound with bracelet bands,
The pallid gloves are on the hands,
And all the flowers the maid held dear
Are strew'd within her gilded bier;
A hundred sleeves with lawn are pale,
A hundred crapes wave in the gale,
And, in a motley, mix'd array,
The funeral train winds down Glen-Reigh.
Alack! how shortly thoughts were lasting
Of the grave to which they all were hasting!

The grave is open; the mourners gaze
On bones and skulls of former days;
The pall's withdrawn—in letters sheen,
" Maria Gray—aged eighteen,"
Is read by all with heaving sighs,
And ready hands to moisten'd eyes.
Solemn and slow, the bier is laid
Into its deep and narrow bed,
And the mould rattles o'er the dead!

What sound like that can be conceived?
That thunder to a soul bereaved!
When crumbling bones grate on the bier
Of all the bosom's core held dear;
'Tis like a growl of hideous wrath—
The last derisive laugh of Death
Over his victim that lies under;
The heart's last bands then rent asunder,
And no communion more to be
Till time melt in Eternity!

From that dread moment Elen's soul
Seem'd to outfly its earthly goal;

And her refined and subtile frame,
Uplifted by unearthly flame,
Seem'd soul alone—in likelihood,
A spirit made of flesh and blood—
A thing whose being and whose bliss
Were bound to better world than this.

Her face, that with new lustre beam'd,
Like features of a seraph seem'd;
A meekness, mix'd with a degree
Of fervid, wild sublimity,
Mark'd all her actions and her moods.
She sought the loneliest solitudes,
By the dingly dell or the silver spring,
Her holy hymns of the dead to sing;
For all her songs and language bland
Were of a loved and heavenly land—
A land of saints and angels fair,
And of a late dear dweller there;
But, watch'd full often, ears profane
Once heard the following solemn strain:—

Maria Gray. A Song.

Who says that Maria Gray is dead,
And that I in this world can see her never?
Who says she is laid in her cold death-bed,
The prey of the grave and of death for ever?
Ah! they know little of my dear maid,
Or kindness of her spirit's giver!
For every night she is by my side,
By the morning bower, or the moonlight river.

Maria was bonny, when she was here,
When flesh and blood was her mortal dwelling;
Her smile was sweet, and her mind was clear,
And her form all human forms excelling.
But oh! if they saw Maria now,
With her looks of pathos and of feeling,
They would see a cherub's radiant brow,
To ravish'd mortal eyes unveiling!

The rose is the fairest of earthly flowers—
It is all of beauty and of sweetness—

So my dear maid, in the heavenly bowers,
Excels in beauty and in meetness.
She has kiss'd my cheek, she has kemb'd my hair,
And made a breast of heaven my pillow,
And promised her God to take me there,
Before the leaf falls from the willow.

Farewell, ye homes of living men!
I have no relish for your pleasures—
In the human face I nothing ken
That with my spirit's yearning measures:
I long for onward bliss to be,
A day of joy, a brighter morrow;
And from this bondage to be free.
Farewell, thou world of sin and sorrow!

O great was the wonder, and great was the dread,
Of the friends of the living, and friends of the dead;
For every evening and morning were seen
Two maidens, where only one should have been!
Still hand in hand they moved, and sung
Their hymns, on the walks they trode when young;

And one night some of the watcher train
Were said to have heard this holy strain
Wafted upon the trembling air.
It was sung by one, although two were there:—

Hymn over a Dying Virgin.

"O Thou whom once thy redeeming love
Brought'st down to earth from the throne above,
Stretch forth thy cup of salvation free
To a thirsty soul, that longs for Thee!
O Thou who left'st the realms of day,
Whose blessed head in a manger lay,
See her here prostrate before thy throne,
Who trusts in Thee, and in Thee alone!

"O Thou, who once, as thy earthly rest,
Wert cradled on a virgin's breast,
For the sake of one who held thee dear,
Extend thy love to this virgin here!
Thou Holy One, whose blood was spilt
Upon the Cross, for human guilt,

This humbled virgin's longings see,
And take her soul in peace to Thee!"

That very night the mysterious dame
Not home to her father's dwelling came;
Though her maidens sat in chill dismay,
And watch'd, and call'd, till the break of day.
But in the dawning, with fond regard,
They sought the bower where the song was heard,
And found her form stretch'd on the green,
The loveliest corpse that ever was seen.
She lay as in balmy sleep reposed,
While her lips and eyes were sweetly closed,
As if about to awake and speak;
For a dimpling smile was on her cheek,
And the pale rose there had a gentle glow,
Like the morning's tint on a wreath of snow.

All was so seemly and serene,
As she lay composed upon the green,
It was plain to all that no human aid,
But an angel's hand, had the body laid;

For from her form there seem'd to rise,
The sweetest odours of Paradise.
Around her temples and brow so fair,
White roses were twined in her auburn hair;
All bound with a birch and holly band,
And the book of God was in her right hand.

Farewell, ye flowerets of sainted fame,
Ye sweetest maidens of mortal frame;
A sacred love o'er your lives presided,
And in your deaths you were not divided!
O, blessed are they who bid adieu
To this erring nature as pure as you!

THE GOOD MAN OF ALLOA.

Did you never hear of a queer auld man,
A very strange man was he,
Who dwelt on the bonny banks of Forth,
In a town full dear to me?

But if all be true, as I heard tell,
And as I shall tell to thee,
There was never such a thing befell
To a man in this countrye.

One day he sat on a lonely brae,
And sorely he made his moan,
For his youthful days had pass'd away,
And ronkilt age came on;

And he thought of the lightsome days of love,
And joyful happy souls,
Quhill the tears ran ower the auld man's cheeks,
And down on his button holes.

" Ochone, ochone!" quod the poor auld man,
" Where shall I go lay mine head?
For I am weary of this world,
And I wish that I were dead;

" That I were dead, and in my grave,
Where cares could not annoy,
And my soul safely in a land
Of riches and of joy.

" Yet would I like ane cozy bed
To meet the stroke of death,
With a holy psalm sung ower mine head,
And swoofit with my last breath.

" With a kind hand to close mine eyne,
And shed a tear for me;
But, alack, for poverty and eild,
Siccan joys I can never see!

" For, though I have toil'd these seventy years,
Wasting both blood and bone,
Striving for riches as for life,
Yet riches I have none.

" For though I seized them by the tail,
With proud and joyful mind,
Yet did they take them wings and fly,
And leave me here behind;

" They left me here to rant and rair,
Mocking my raving tongue,
Though skraighing like ane gainder goose,
That is 'reft of his young.

" Oh, woe is me! for all my toil,
And all my dear bought gains,
Yet must I die a cauldrife death,
In poverty and pains!

" Oh! where are all my riches gone,
Where, or to what countrye?
There is gold enough into this world,
But none of it made for me.

" Yet Providence was sore misled,
My riches to destroy,
Else many a poor and virtuous heart
Should have had cause of joy."

Then the poor auld man laid down his head,
And rairit for very grief,
And streikit out his limbs to die;
For he knew of no relief.

But bye there came a lovely dame,
Upon a palfrey gray,
And she listen'd unto the auld man's tale
And all he had to say

Of all his griefs, and sore regret,
For things that him befell,
And because he could not feed the poor,
Which thing he loved so well.

" It is great pity," quod the dame,
" That one so very kind,
So full of charity and love,
And of such virtuous mind,

" Should lie and perish on a brae,
Of poverty and eild,
Without one single hand to prove
His solace and his shield."

She took the old man her behind
Upon her palfrey gray,
And swifter nor the southland wind
They scour'd the velvet brae.

And the palfrey's tail behind did sail
O'er locker and o'er lea;
While the tears stood in the old man's eyne,
With swiftness and with glee;

For the comely dame had promised him
Of riches mighty store,
That his kind heart might have full scope
For feeding of the poor.

" Now grace me save!" said the good old man;
" Where bears thy bridle hand?
Art thou going to break the Greenock Bank?
Or the Bank of fair Scotland?

" My conscience hardly this may brook;
But on this you may depend,
Whatever is given unto me,
Is to a righteous end.

" Keep thou thy seat," said the comely dame,
" And conscience clear and stenne;
There is plenty of gold in the sea's bottom
To enrich ten thousand men.

" Ride on with me, and thou shalt see
What treasures there do lie;
For I can gallop the emerald wave,
And along its channels, dry."

" If thou canst do that," said the good old man,
" Thou shalt ride thy lane for me;
For I can neither swim, nor dive,
Nor walk the raging sea.

" For the salt water would blind mine eyne,
And what should I see there?
And buller buller down my throat;
Which thing I could not bear."

But away and away flew the comely dame
O'er moorland and o'er fell;
But whether they went north or south,
The old man could not tell.

And the palfrey's tail behind did sail,
A comely sight to see,
Like little wee comet of the dale
Gaun skimmering o'er the lea.

When the old man came to the salt sea's brink,
He quaked at the ocean faem;
But the palfrey splash'd into the same,
As it were its native hame.

"Now Christ us save!" cried the good old man;
"Hath madness seized thine head?
For we shall sink in the ocean wave,
And bluther quhill we be dead."

But the palfrey dash'd o'er the bounding wave,
With snifter and with stenne;
It was firmer nor the firmest sward
In all the Deffane glen.

But the good old man he held as Death
Holds by a sinner's tail,
Or as a craven clings to life,
When death does him assail.

And the little wee palfrey shot away,
Like dragon's fiery train,
And up the wave, and down the wave,
Like meteor of the main.

And its streaming tail behind did sail
With shimmer and with shine;
And whenever it struck the mane of the wave,
The flashes of fire were seen.

"Ochone! ochone!" said the good old man,
"It is awesome to be here!
I fear these riches for which I greine
Shall cost me very dear.

"For we are running such perilous race
As mortals never ran;
And the devil is in that little beast,
If ever he was in man!"

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" Hurrah! hurrah! my bonnie gray!"
Cried the Maiden of the Sea:
" Ha! thou canst sweep the emerant deep
Swifter nor bird can flee!

" For thou wast bred in a coral bed,
Beneath a silver sun,
Where the broad daylight, or the moon by night,
Could never never won;

" Where the buirdly whale could never sail,
Nor the lazy walrus row;
And the little wee thing that gave thee suck,
Was a thing of the caves below.

" And thou shalt run till the last sun
Sink o'er the westland hill;
And thou shalt ride the ocean tide
Till all its waves lie still.

" Away! away! my bonnie gray!
Where billows rock the dead,
And where the richest prize lies low,
In all the ocean's bed.

The palfrey scrapit with his foot,
And snorkit fearsomelye;
Then lookit over his left shoulder,
To see what he could see.

And as ever you saw a moudiwort
Bore into a foggy lea,
So did this little devilish beast
Dive down into the sea.

The good old man he gave a rair
As loud as he could strain:
But the waters closed aboon his head,
And down he went amain!

But he neither blutherit with his breath,
Nor gaspit with his ganne,
And not one drop of salt water
Adown his thropple ran.

But he rode as fair, and he rode as free,
As if all swaithed and furl'd
In Mackintosh's patent ware,—
The marvel of this world.

At length they came to a gallant ship,
In the channels of the sea,
That leant her shoulder to a rock,
With her masts full sore aglee.

And there lay many a gallant man,
Rock'd by the moving main;
And soundly soundly did they sleep,
Never to wake again.

The ships might sail, and friends might wail,
On margin of the sea,
But news of them they would never hear
Till the days of eternitye;

For it was plain, as plain could be,
From all they saw around,
That the ship had gone down to the deep
Without one warning sound—

Without one prayer pour'd to heaven—
Without one parting sigh,
Like sea-bird sailing on the wave,
That dives we know not why.

It was a woeful sight to see,
In bowels of the deep,
Lovers and lemans lying clasp'd
In everlasting sleep.

So calmly they lay on their glitty beds,
And in their hammocks swung,
And the billows rock'd their drowsy forms,
And over their cradles sung.

And there was laid a royal maid,
As calm as if in heaven,
Who had three gold rings on each finger,
On her mid finger seven;

And she had jewels in her ears,
And bracelets brave to see;
The gold that was around her head
Would have bought earldoms three.

Then the good old man pull'd out his knife,—
It was both sharp and clear,—
And he cut off the maiden's fingers small,
And the jewels from ilka ear.

" Oh, shame, oh, shame!" said the comely dame,
" Woe worth thy ruthless hand!
How darest thou mangle a royal corpse,
Once flower of many a land?

" And all for the sake of trinkets vain,
'Mid such a store as this!"
" Ochone, alake!" quod the good auld man,
" You judge full far amiss;

" It is better they feed the righteous poor,
That on their God depend,
Than to lie slumbering in the deep
For neither use nor end,

" Unless to grace a partan's limb
With costly, shining ore,
Or deck a lobster's burly snout,—
A beast which I abhor!"

Then the Sea Maid smiled a doubtful smile,
And said, with lifted ee,—
" Full many a righteous man I have seen,
But never a one like thee!

" But thou shalt have thine heart's desire,
In feeding the upright;
And all the good shall bless the day
That first thou saw the light."

Then she loaded him with gems and gold,
On channel of the main;
Yet the good old man was not content,
But turn'd him back again.

And every handful he put in,
He said right wistfullye,
" Och, this will ane whole fortune prove
For one poor familye!"

And he neifuit in, and he neifuit in,
And never could refrain,
Quhill the little wee horse he could not move,
Nor mount the wave again;

But he snorkit with his little nose,
Till he made the sea rocks ring,
And waggit his tail across the wave
With many an angry swing.

" Come away, come away, my little bonnie gray,
Think of the good before;
There is as much gold upon thy back
As will feed ten thousand poor!"

Then the little wee horse he strauchlit on,
Through darkling scenes, sublime—
O'er shoals, and stones, and dead men's bones;
But the wave he could not climb:

But along, along, he sped along
The floors of the silent sea,
With a world of waters o'er his head,
And groves of the coral tree.

And the tide stream flow'd, and the billows row'd
An hundred fathoms high;
And the light that lighted the floors below
Seem'd from some other sky;

For it stream'd and trembled on its way,
Of beams and splendour shorn,
And flow'd with an awful holiness,
As on a journey born.

Till at length they saw the glorious sun,
Far in the west that glow'd,
Flashing like fire-flaughts up and down
With every wave that row'd.

Then the old man laugh'd a heartsome laugh,
And a heartsome laugh laugh'd he,
To see the sun in such a trim
Dancing so furiouslye;

For he thought the angels of the even
Had taken the blessed sun,
To toss in the blue blanket of heaven,
To make them glorious fun.

But at length the May, and her palfrey gray,
And the good old man beside,
Set their three heads aboon the wave,
And came in with the flowing tide.

Then all the folks on the shores of Fife
A terror flight began,
And the burgess men of old Kinross
They left their hames and ran.

For they kend the Sea Maid's glossy ee,
Like the blue of heaven that shone;
And the little wee horse of the coral cave,
That neither had blood nor bone.

And they said, when she came unto their coast,
She never came there for good,
But warning to give of storms and wrecks,
And the shedding of Christian blood.

Alake for the good men of Kinross,
For their wits were never rife!
For now she came with a mighty store,
For the saving of poor men's life.

When the little wee horse he found his feet
On the firm ground and the dry,
He shook his mane, and gave a graen,
And threw his heels on high,

Quhill the gold play'd jingle on the shore,
That eased him of his pain;
Then he turn'd and kick'd it where it lay,
In very great disdain.

And he hatt the old man right behind
With such unsparing might,
That he made him jump seven ells and more,
And on his face to light.

"Now, woe be to thee for a wicked beast!
For since ever thy life began,
I never saw thee lift thy foot
Against a righteous man.

"But fare thee well, thou good old man,
Thy promise keep in mind;
Let this great wealth I have given to thee
Be a blessing to thy kind.

"So as thou strive so shalt thou thrive,
And be it understood
That I must visit thee again,
For evil or for good."

Then the bonny May she rode her way
Along the sea-wave green,
And away and away on her palfrey gray,
Like the ocean's comely queen.

As she fared up the Firth of Forth
The fishes fled all before,
And a thousand cods and haddocks brave
Ran swattering right ashore.

A hundred-and-thretty buirdly whales
Went snoring up the tide,
And wide on Alloa's fertile holms
They gallop'd ashore and died.*

* As this is likely to be the only part of my truthful ballad the veracity of which may be disputed, I assure the reader that it is a literal fact; and that, with a single tide, in the month of March, a few years ago, not less than 130 whales were left ashore in the vicinity of Alloa. The men of Alloa called them young ones; but to me it appeared that they had been immense fishes. Their skeletons at a distance were like those of large horses. Two old ones ran up as far as the mill-dam of Cambus, on the Devon, where they were left by the retreating tide, and where, after a day's severe exercise and excellent sport to a great multitude, they were both slain, along with a young one, which one of the old whales used every effort to defend, bellowing most fearfully when she saw it attacked. On testifying my wonder to the men of Cambus why the whales should all have betaken them to the dry land, I was answered by a sly fellow, that "A mermaid had been seen driving them up the Firth, which had frightened them so much, it had put them all out of their judgments!"

But it grieveth my heart to tell to you,
What I never have told before,
Of that man so righteous and so good,
So long as he was poor;

But, whenever he got more store of gold
Than ever his wits could tell,
He never would give a mite for good,
Neither for heaven nor hell.

But he brooded o'er that mighty store
With sordid heart of sin,
And the houseless wight, or the poor by night,
His gate wan never within.

And the last accounts I had of him
Are very strange to tell,—
He was seen with the May and the palfrey gray
Riding fiercely out through hell.

For the Minister of Alloa he was there,
With some of his friends in tow,
Putting them up in that cozy hame,
Where he told them they should go.

And the Minister knows the place full well,
And great delight hath he
For to descrive it out and in,
In patent geographye.

And he said he saw the poor old man
With the Maiden of the Sea,
Bounding away to the hottest place
Of all that hot countrye.

And aye she cried, " Hurrah, hurrah!
Make room for me and mine!
I bring you the Man of Alloa
To his punishment condign!

" His Maker tried him in the fire,
To make his heart contrite;
But, when he gat his heart's desire,
He proved a hypocrite."

And when the Minister he came hame,
He heard with wondering mind,
That the miser had gane, and left this world
And his riches all behind.

Then all you poor and contrite ones,
In deep afflictions hurl'd,
O, never grieve or vex your hearts
For the riches of this world;

For they bring neither health nor peace
Unto thy spirit's frame;
And there is a treasure better far,
Which minstrel dares not name.

Hast thou not heard an olden say,
By one who could not lee?—
It is something of a great big beast
Going through a needle's ee.

Then think of that, and be content;
For life is but a day,
And the night of death is gathering fast
To close upon your way.

I have a prayer I oft have pray'd,
And oft would pray it again—
May the best blessings Heaven can give
On Alloa long remain!

I never ask a blessing meet,
Either on kith or kin,
But the kind hearts of Alloa
That asking come within.

Then may they learn, from their Shepherd's tale,
To trust in Heaven alone,
And they'll never be met by their Minister
In such a place as yon.

JOCK JOHNSTONE THE TINKLER.

"Oh, came ye ower by the Yoke-burn Ford,
Or down the King's Road of the cleuch?
Or saw ye a Knight and a Lady bright,
Wha hae gane the gate they baith shall rue?"

"I saw a Knight and a Lady bright,
Ride up the cleuch at the break of day;
The Knight upon a coal-black steed,
And the dame on one of the silver gray.

"And the Lady's palfrey flew the first,
With many a clang of silver bell:
Swift as the raven's morning flight,
The two went scouring ower the fell.

" By this time they are man and wife,
And standing in St Mary's fane;
And the Lady in the grass-green silk
A maid you will never see again."

" But I can tell thee, saucy wight,—
And that the runaways shall prove,—
Revenge to a Douglas is as sweet
As maiden charms or maiden's love."

" Since thou say'st that, my Lord Douglas,
Good faith some clinking there will be;
Beshrew my heart, but and my sword,
If I winna turn and ride with thee!"

They whipp'd out ower the Shepherd cleuch,
And down the links o' the Corsecleuch burn;
And aye the Douglas swore by his sword
To win his love or ne'er return.

" First fight your rival, Lord Douglas,
And then brag after, if you may;
For the Earl of Ross is as brave a lord
As ever gave good weapon sway.

" But I for ae poor siller merk,
Or thirteen pennies an' a bawbee,
Will tak in hand to fight you baith,
Or beat the winner, whiche'er it be."

The Douglas turn'd him on his steed,
And I wat a loud laughter leuch he:—
" Of all the fools I have ever met,
Man, I hae never met ane like thee.

" Art thou akin to lord or knight,
Or courtly squire or warrior leal?"
" I am a Tinkler," quo the wight,
" But I like crown-cracking unco weel."

When they came to St Mary's kirk,
The chaplain shook for very fear;
And aye he kiss'd the cross, and said,
" What deevil has sent that Douglas here!

" He neither values book nor ban,
But curses all without demur;
And cares nae mair for a holy man,
Than I do for a worthless cur."

" Come here, thou bland and brittle priest,
And tell to me without delay,
Where you have hid the Lord of Ross,
And the Lady that came at the break of day?"

" No knight or lady, good Lord Douglas,
Have I beheld since break of morn;
And I never saw the Lord of Ross,
Since the woeful day that I was born."

Lord Douglas turn'd him round about,
And look'd the Tinkler in the face;
Where he beheld a lurking smile,
And a deevil of a dour grimace.

" How's this, how's this, thou Tinkler loun?
Hast thou presumed to lie to me?"
" Faith that I have!" the Tinkler said,
" And a right good turn I have done to thee;

" For the Lord of Ross, and thy own true love,
The beauteous Harriet of Thirlestane,
Rade west away, ere the break of day;
And you'll never see that dear maid again:

" So I thought it best to bring you here,
On a wrang scent, of my own accord;
For had you met the Johnstone clan,
They wad hae made mince-meat of a lord."

At this the Douglas was so wroth,
He wist not what to say or do;
But he strak the Tinkler o'er the croun,
Till the blood came dreeping ower his brow.

" Beshrew thy heart," quo the Tinkler lad,
" Thou bear'st thee most ungallantlye!
If these are the manners of a lord,
They are manners that winna gang down wi' me."

" Hold up thy hand," the Douglas cried,
" And keep thy distance, Tinkler loun!"
" That will I not," the Tinkler said,
" Though I and my mare should both go down!"

" I have armour on," cried the Lord Douglas,
" Cuirass and helm, as you may see."
" The deil may care!" quo the Tinkler lad;
" I shall have a skelp at them and thee."

" You are not horsed," quo the Lord Douglas,
" And no remorse this weapon brooks."
" Mine's a right good yaud," quo the Tinkler lad,
" And a great deal better nor she looks.

" So stand to thy weapons, thou haughty lord,
What I have taken I needs must give;
Thou shalt never strike a tinkler again,
For the langest day thou hast to live."

Then to it they fell, both sharp and snell,
Till the fire from both their weapons flew;
But the very first shock that they met with,
The Douglas his rashness 'gan to rue.

For though he had on a sark of mail,
And a cuirass on his breast wore he,
With a good steel bonnet on his head,
Yet the blood ran trinkling to his knee.

The Douglas sat upright and firm,
Aye as together their horses ran;
But the Tinkler laid on like a very deil,—
Siccan strokes were never laid on by man.

"Hold up thy hand, thou Tinkler loun,"
Cried the poor priest, with whining din;
"If thou hurt the brave Lord James Douglas,
A curse be on thee and all thy kin!"

"I care no more for Lord James Douglas,
Than Lord James Douglas cares for me;
But I want to let his proud heart know,
That a Tinkler's a man as well as he."

So they fought on, and they fought on,
Till good Lord Douglas' breath was gone,
And the Tinkler bore him to the ground,
With rush, with rattle, and with groan.

"O hon! O hon!" cried the proud Douglas,
"That I this day should have lived to see!
For sure my honour I have lost,
And a leader again I can never be!

"But tell me of thy kith and kin,
And where was bred thy weapon hand?
For thou art the wale of tinkler louns
That ever were born in Fair Scotland."

" My name's Jock Johnstone," quo the wight,—
" I winna keep in my name frae thee;
And here, take thou thy sword again,
And better friends we two shall be."

But the Douglas swore a solemn oath,
That was a debt he could never owe;
He would rather die at the back of the dike,
Than owe his sword to a man so low.

" But if thou wilt ride under my banner,
And bear my livery and my name,
My right-hand warrior thou shalt be,
And I'll knight thee on the field of fame."

" Woe worth thy wit, good Lord Douglas,
To think I 'd change my trade for thine;
Far better and wiser would you be,
To live as journeyman of mine,

" To mend a kettle or a casque,
Or clout a goodwife's yettlin pan,—
Upon my life, good Lord Douglas,
You'd make a noble tinkler man!

"I would give you drammock twice a-day,
And sunkets on a Sunday morn;
And you should be a rare adept
In steel and copper, brass and horn!

"I'll fight you every day you rise,
Till you can act the hero's part;
Therefore, I pray you, think of this,
And lay it seriously to heart."

The Douglas writhed beneath the lash,
Answering with an inward curse,—
Like salmon wriggling on a spear,
That makes his deadly wound the worse.

But up there came two squires renown'd;
In search of Lord Douglas they came;
And when they saw their master down,
Their spirits mounted in a flame.

And they flew upon the Tinkler wight,
Like perfect tigers on their prey;
But the Tinkler heaved his trusty sword,
And made him ready for the fray.

" Come one to one ye coward knaves,—
Come hand to hand, and steed to steed,
I would that ye were better men,
For this is glorious work indeed!"

Before you could have counted twelve,
The Tinkler's wondrous chivalrye
Had both the squires upon the sward,
And their horses galloping o'er the lea.

The Tinkler tied them neck and heel,
And mony a biting jest gave he:
" O fie, for shame!" said the Tinkler lad,
" Siccan fighters I did never see!"

He slit one of their bridal reins,—
O what disgrace the conquer'd feels!
And he skelpit the squires with that good tawse,
Till the blood ran off at baith their heels.

The Douglas he was forced to laugh,
Till down his cheek the salt tears ran:
" I think the deevil be come here
In the likeness of a tinkler man!"

Then he is to Lord Douglas gone,
And he raised him kindly by the hand,
And he set him on his gallant steed,
And bore him away to Henderland:

" Be not cast down, my Lord Douglas,
Nor writhe beneath a broken bane,
For the leach's art will mend the part,
And your honour lost will spring again.

" 'Tis true, Jock Johnstone is my name,
I'm a right good tinkler, as you see;
For I can crack a casque betimes,
Or clout one, as my need may be.

" Jock Johnstone is my name, 'tis true,—
But noble hearts are allied to me,
For I am the Lord of Annandale,
And a Knight and Earl as well as thee."

Then Douglas strain'd the hero's hand,
And took from it his sword again;
Since thou art the Lord of Annandale,
Thou hast eased my heart of meikle pain.

" I might have known thy noble form,
In that disguise thou 'rt pleased to wear;
All Scotland knows thy matchless arm,
And England, by experience dear.

" We have been foes as well as friends,
And jealous of each other's sway;
But little can I comprehend
Thy motive for these pranks to-day?"

" Sooth, my good Lord, the truth to tell,
'Twas I that stole your love away,
And gave her to the Lord of Ross
An hour before the break of day:

" For the Lord of Ross is my brother,
By all the laws of chivalrye;
And I brought with me a thousand men
To guard him to my own countrye.

" But I thought meet to stay behind,
And try your lordship to waylay;
Resolved to breed some noble sport,
By leading you so far astray.

"Judging it better some lives to spare,—
Which fancy takes me now and then,—
And settle our quarrel hand to hand,
Than each with our ten thousand men.

"God send you soon, my Lord Douglas,
To Border foray sound and haill!
But never strike a tinkler again,
If he be a Johnstone of Annandale."

A LAY OF THE MARTYRS.

"Oh where have you been, bonny Marley Reid?
For mony a long night and day
I have miss'd ye sair, at the Wanlock-head,
And the cave o' the Louther brae.

"Our friends are waning fast away,
Baith frae the cliff and the wood;
They are tearing them frae us ilka day;
For there's naething will please but blood.

"And, O bonny Marley, I maun now
Gie your heart muckle pain,
For your bridegroom is a-missing too,
And 'tis fear'd that he is ta'en.

" We have sought the caves o' the Enterkin,
And the dens o' the Ballybough,
And a' the howes o' the Ganna linn;
And we wot not what to do."

" Dispel your fears, good Marjory Laing,
And hope all for the best,
For the servants of God will find a place,
Their weary heads to rest.

" There are better places, that we ken o',
And seemlier to be in,
Than all the dens of the Ballybough,
Or howes o' the Ganna linn.

" But sit thee down, good Marjory Laing,
And listen a while to me,
For I have a tale to tell to you,
That will bring you to your knee:

" I went to seek my own dear James
In the cave o' the Louther brae,
For I had some things, that, of a' the world,
He best deserved to hae.

" I had a kebbuck in my lap,
And a fadge o' the flour sae sma',
And a sark I had made for his boardly back,
As white as the new-dri'en snaw.

" I sought him over hill and dale,
Shouting by cave and tree;
But only the dell, with its eiry yell,
An answer return'd to me.

" I sought him up, and I sought him down,
And echoes return'd his name,
Till the gloffs o' dread shot to my heart,
And dirled through a' my frame.

" I sat me down by the Enterkin,
And saw, in a fearful line,
The red dragoons come up the path,
Wi' prisoners eight or nine;

" And one of them was my dear, dear James,
The flower of a' his kin;
He was wounded behind, and wounded before,
And the blood ran frae his chin.

" He was bound upon a weary hack,
Lash'd both by hough and heel,
And his hands were bound behind his back,
Wi' the thumbikins of steel.

" I kneel'd before that Popish band,
In the fervour of inward strife,
And I raised to Heaven my trembling hand,
And begg'd my husband's life.

" But all the troop laugh'd me to scorn,
Making my grief their game;
And the Captain said some words to me,
Which I cannot tell you for shame.

" And then he cursed our Whiggish race,
With a proud and a scornful brow,
And bade me look at my husband's face,
And say how I liked him now.

' Oh, I like him weel, thou proud Captain,
Though the blood runs to his knee,
And all the better for the grievous wrongs,
He has suffer'd this day frae thee.

'But can you feel within your heart
That comely youth to slay?
For the hope you have in Heaven, Captain,
Let him gang wi' me away!'

"Then the Captain swore a fearfu' oath,
With loathsome jest and mock,
That he thought no more of a Whigamore's life,
Than the life of a noisome brock.

"Then my poor James to the Captain call'd,
And he begg'd baith hard and sair,
To have one kiss of his bonny bride,
Ere we parted for evermair.

'I'll do that for you,' said the proud Captain,
'And save you the toil to-day,
And, moreover, I'll take her little store,
To support you by the way.'

"He took my bountith from my lap,
And I saw, with sorrow dumb,
That he parted it all among his men,
And gave not my love one crumb.

'Now, fare you well, my very bonny bride,'
Cried the Captain with disdain;
'When I come back to the banks of Nith,
I shall kiss you sweetly then.

'Your heartiest thanks must sure be given,
For what I have done to-day,—
I am taking him straight on the road to Heaven;
And short will be the way!'

"My love he gave me a parting look,
And bless'd me fervently,
And the tears they mix'd wi' his purple blood,
And ran down to his knee."

"What's this I hear, bonny Marley Reid?
How could these woes betide?
For blither you could not look this day,
Were your husband by your side.

"One of two things alone is left,
And dreadful the one to me,
For either your fair wits are reft,
Or else your husband's free."

" Allay your fears, good Marjory Laing,
And hear me out the rest;
You little ken what a bride will do,
For the youth she likes the best!

" I hied me home to my father's ha',
And through a' my friends I ran,
And I gather'd me up a purse o' gowd,
To redeem my young goodman:

" For I kenn'd the Papish lowns would weel
My fair intent approve;
For they'll do far mair for the good red gowd,
Than they'll do for Heaven above.

" And away I ran to Edinburgh town,
Of my shining treasure vain,
To buy my James from the prison strong,
Or there with him remain.

" I sought through a' the city jails,
I sought baith lang and sair;
But the guardsmen turn'd me frae their doors,
And swore that he was not there.

" I went away to the Popish Duke,
Who was my love's judge to be,
And I proffer'd him a' my yellow store,
If he'd grant his life to me.

" He counted the red gowd slowly o'er,
By twenties and by tens,
And said I had taken the only means
To attain my hopeful ends.

' And now,' said he, ' your husband's safe;
You may take this pledge of me:
And I'll tell you, fair one, where you'll go
To gain this certaintye,—

' Gang west the street and down the Bow,
And through the market place,
And there you will meet with a gentleman,
Of a tall and courteous grace;

' He is clad in a livery of the green,
With a plume aboon his bree,
And arm'd with a halbert, glittering sheen:
Your love he will let you see.'

" O, Marjory, never flew blithsome bird,
So light out through the sky,
As I flew up that stately street,
Weeping for very joy.

" Oh never flew lamb out o'er the lea,
When the sun gangs o'er the hill,
Wi' lighter, blither steps than me,
Or skipp'd wi' sic good will!

" And aye I bless'd the precious ore,
My husband's life that wan;
And I even bless'd the Popish Duke,
For a kind, good-hearted man.

" The officer I soon found out,—
For he could not be mistook;
But in all my life I never beheld
Sic a grim and a grousome look.

" I ask'd him for my dear, dear James,
With throbs of wild delight,
And begg'd him, in his master's name,
To take me to his sight.

" He ask'd me for his true address,
With a voice at which I shook;
For I saw that he was a Popish knave,
By the terror of his look.

" I named the name with a buoyant voice,
That trembled with ecstasye;
But the savage bray'd a hideous laugh,
Then turn'd and grinn'd at me.

" He pointed up to the city wall:
One look benumb'd my soul;
For there I saw my husband's head
Fix'd high upon a pole!

" His yellow hair waved in the wind,
And far behind did flee,
And his right hand hang beside his cheek, —
A waesome sight to see.

" His chin hang down on open space,
Yet comely was his brow,
And his eyne were open to the breeze, —
There was nane to close them now!

'What think you of your true love now?'
The hideous porter said;
'Is not that a comely sight to see,
And sweet to a Whiggish maid?'

'Oh, haud your tongue, ye Popish slave,
For I downa answer you;
He was dear, dear to my heart before,
But never sae dear as now!

'I see a sight you cannot see,
Which man cannot efface;
I see a ray of heavenly love
Beaming on that dear face.

'And weel I ken yon bonny brent brow,
Will smile in the walks on high,
And yon yellow hair, all blood-stain'd now,
Maun wave aboon the sky.'

"But can you trow me, Marjory dear?—
In the might of heavenly grace,
There was never a sigh burst frae my heart,
Nor a tear ran o'er my face.

" But I bless'd my God, who had thus seen meet
To take him from my side,
To call him home to the courts above,
And leave me a virgin bride."

" Alack; alack, bonny Marley Reid,
That sic days we hae lived to see!
For siccan a cruel and wäefu' tale
Was never yet heard by me.

" And all this time, I have, trembling, ween'd
That your dear wits were gone;
For there is a joy in your countenance,
Which I never saw beam thereon.

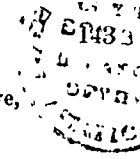
" Then let us kneel with humble hearts,
To the God whom we revere,
Who never yet laid that burden on,
Which he gave not strength to bear."

BOTHWELL BRIGG.

"Oh what is become o' your leal goodman,
That now you are a' your lane?
If he has join'd wi' the rebel gang,
You will never see him again."

"O say nae 'the rebel gang,' Ladye;
It's a term nae heart can thole,
For them wha rebel against their God,
It is justice to control.

"When rank oppression rends the heart,
And rules wi' stroke o' death,
Wha wadna spend their dear heart's blood
For the tenets o' their faith?



" Then say nae 'the rebel gang,' Ladye,
For it gies me muckle pain;
My John went away with Earlston,
And I'll never see either again."

" O wae is my heart for thee, Janet,
O sair is my heart for thee!
These Covenant men were ill advised;
They are fools, you may credit me.

" Where 's a' their boastfu' preaching now,
Against their King and law,
When mony a head in death lies low,
And mony mae maun fa'?"

" Ay, but death lasts no for aye, Ladye,
For the grave mauh yield its prey;
And when we meet on the verge of heaven,
We 'll see wha are fools that day:

" We 'll see wha looks in their Saviour's face
With holiest joy and pride,
Whether they who shed his servants' blood,
Or those that for him died.

" I wadna be the highest dame
That ever this country knew,
And take my chance to share the doom
Of that persecuting crew.

" Then ca' us na 'rebel gang,' Ladye,
Nor take us fools to be,
For there isna ane of a' that gang,
Wad change his state wi' thee."

" Oh weel may you be, my poor Janet,
May blessings on you combine!
The better you are in either state,
The less shall I repine;

" But wi' your fightings and your faith,
Your ravings and your rage,
There you have lost a leal helpmate,
In the blossom of his age.

" And what's to come o' ye, my poor Janet,
Wi' these twa babies sweet?
Ye hae naebody now to work for them,
Or bring you a meal o' meat;

" It is that which makes my heart sae wae,
And gars me, while scarce aware,
Whiles say the things I wadna say,
Of them that can err nae mair."

Poor Janet kiss'd her youngest babe,
And the tears fell on his cheek,
And they fell upon his swaddling bands,
For her heart was like to break.

" Oh little do I ken, my dear, dear babes,
What misery's to be mine!
But for the cause we hae espoused,
I will yield my life and thine.

" Oh had I a friend, as I hae nane,—
For nane dare own me now,—
That I might send to Bothwell brigg,
If the killers wad but allow,

" To lift the corpse of my brave John!
I ken where they will him find,—
He wad meet his God's foes face to face,
And he 'll hae nae wound behind."

" But I went to Bothwell brigg, Janet,—
There was nane durst hinder me,—
For I wantit to hear a' I could hear,
And to see what I could see;

" And there I found your brave husband,
As viewing the dead my lane;
He was lying in the very foremost rank,
In the midst of a heap o' slain."

Then Janet held up her hands to heaven,
And she grat, and she tore her hair,
" O sweet Ladye, O dear Ladye,
Dinna tell me ony mair!

" There is a hope will linger within,
When earthly hope is vain,
But, when ane kens the very worst,
It turns the heart to stane!"

' Oh wae is my heart, John Carr,' said I,
' That I this sight should see!'
And when I said these waefu' words,
He lifted his eyne to me.

'O art thou there, my kind Ladye,
The best o' this warld's breed,
And are you ganging your leifou lane,
Amang the hapless dead?'

'I hae servants within my ca', John Carr,
And a chariot in the dell,
And, if there is ony hope o' life,
I will carry you hame mysell.'

'O Lady, there is nae hope o' life;
And what were life to me?
Wad ye save me frae the death of a man,
To hang on a gallows tree?

'I hae nae hame to fly to now,
Nae country, and nae kin;
There is not a door in Fair Scotland
Durst open to let me in.

'But I hae a loving wife at hame,
And twa babies, dear to me;
They hae naebody now that dares favour them,
And of hunger they a' maun dee.

'Oh for the sake of thy Saviour dear,
Whose mercy thou hopest to share,
Dear Lady, take the sackless things
A wee beneath thy care!

'A lang fareweel, my kind Ladye!
O'er weel I ken thy worth.
Gae send me a drink o' the water o' Clyde,
For my last drink on earth.'

"O dinna tell ony mair, Ladye,
For my heart is cauld as clay;
There is a spear that pierces here,
Frae every word ye say."

"He wasna fear'd to dee, Janet,—
For he gloried in his death,
And wish'd to be laid with those who had bled
For the same endearing faith.

"There were three wounds in his boardly breast,
And his limb was broke in twain,
And the sweat ran down wi' his red heart's blood,
Wrung out by the deadly pain.

" I row'd my apron round his head,
For fear my men should tell,
And I hid him in my Lord's castle,
And I nursed him there mysell.

" And the best leeches in a' the land
Have tended him as he lay,
And he never has lack'd my helping hand,
By night nor yet by day.

" I durstna tell you before, Janet,
For I fear'd his life was gane,
But now he 's sae weel, ye may visit him,
An ye 'se meet by yoursells alane."

Then Janet she fell at her Lady's feet,
And she claspit them fervently,
And she steepit them a' wi' the tears o' joy,
Till the good Lady wept to see.

" Oh ye are an angel sent frae heaven,
To lighten calamitye!
For, in distress, a friend or foe
Is a' the same to thee.

" If good deeds count in heaven, Ladye,
Eternal bliss to share,
Ye hae done a deed will save your soul,
Though ye should never do mair."

" Get up, get up, my kind Janet,
But never trow tongue or pen,
That a' the warld are lost to good,
Except the Covenant men."

Wha wadna hae shared that Lady's joy,
When watching the wounded hind,
Rather than those of the feast and the dance,
Which her kind heart resign'd ?

Wha wadna rather share that Lady's fate,
When the stars shall melt away,
Than that of the sternest anchorite,
That can naething but graen and pray ?

THE CARLE OF INVERTIME.

Who has not heard of a Carle uncouth,
The terror of age, and the scorn of youth;
Well known in this and every clime
As the grim Gudeman of Invertime?—
A stern old porter who carries the key
That opens the gate to a strange countrye!

The Carle's old heart with joy is dancing,
When, down the valley, he sees advancing
The lovely, the brave, the good, or the great,
To pay the sad toll of his darksome gate.
'Tis said nought gives such joy to him
As the freezing blood and the stiffening limb:
It has never been mine his house to scan,
So I scarce trow this of our grim Gudeman.

Wise men believe, yet I scarce know why,
That he grimly smiles as he shoves them by;
And cares not whether to isles of bliss
They go, or to sorrow's dark wilderness;
Or if, driven afar, their fate should be
To toss on the waves of a shoreless sea;
Or sunk in lakes of surging flame,
Burning and boiling, and ever the same:
Where groups of mortals toss amain
On the sultry billow, and down again.
Time, from the sky shall blot out the sun,
Yet ne'er with this den of dool have done.
It makes me shake, and it makes me shiver;
His presence forbid it should last for ever!

Sad, wise, or witty—all find, to their cost,
That the grim old Carle is still at his post:
He sits, and he sees, with joy elate,
In myriads, men pour in at his gate.
Some come in gladness and joy, to close
Account with Time, and sink to repose:
Some come in sorrow; they think, in sooth,
It hard to be summon'd in strength and youth.
There lady and losel,—peasant and lord,
Men of the pen, the sermon, the sword;

The counsellor, leach, and the monarch sublime,
All come to the Carle of Invertime.

Amongst the others, one morning came
An aged and a venerable Dame,
Stooping, and palsied, and pain'd to boot,
Moaning, and shaking from head to foot,
Slow in her pace, yet steady of mind,
She turn'd not once, nor look'd behind;
Nor dreading nor daring her future fate,
She totter'd along to the dismal gate.

A gleam of light glanced in the eye
Of the grim Gudeman as the dame drew nigh;
Little cared he for an old gray wife;
Who hung like a link 'tween death and life;
But, by the side of the eldern dame,
A Form so pure and so lovely came,
That the Carle's cold, veinless heart heaved high,
A tear like an ice-drop came to his eye;
He vow'd through his gate she should not win:
She seem'd no child of sorrow and sin.
As thus he stood in his porch to mark,
His looks now light and his looks now dark,

He marvell'd to hear so lovely a thing
Lift up her voice and gently sing
A strain, too holy, too sweet, and wild
And charming, to come from an earthborn child;
It glow'd with love, and fervour, and faith,
And seem'd to triumph o'er time and death:

" Great Fountain of Light,
And Spirit of Might,
To work thy will has been my delight;
And here at my knee,
From guiltiness free,
I bring a mild meek spirit to thee.

" When first I went to guide her to truth,
She was in the opening blossom of youth;
When scarce on her leaf, so spotless and new,
Ripe reason had come with her dropping dew.
Where life's pure river is but a rill,
She grew, and scarce knew good from ill;
But my sisters three
Came soon to me,
Pure Love, true Faith, sweet Charity.

Through doubts and fears,
These eighty years,
We have shew'd her the way to the heavenly spheres.
Our first stage down life's infant stream
Was all a maze and a childish dream;
And nought was there of sin or sense,
But dawning beauty and innocence:
A fairy dance of sweet delight,
Through flowers, and bowers, and visions bright.
Sometimes a hymn, and sometimes a prayer,
Was pour'd to Thee with a fervent air;
'Twas sung or said, and straight was seen
The sweet child gamboling on the green;
While the pure hymn, late pour'd to Thee,
Was chanted light as a song of glee.

"As we went down the vale of life,
With flowers the road became less rife.
By pitfall, precipice and pool,
Our way was shaped, by line and rule.
'Mid hours of joy and days of mirth,
And hopes and fears, high thoughts had birth,
And natural yearnings of the mind,
Of something onward, undefined—

Which scarce the trembling soul durst scan—
Of God's most wondrous love to man,
And some far forward state of bliss,
Of beauty, and of holiness;
But to all woes and evils blinded,
Or thoughts of death, unless reminded.
Oh! happy age, remember'd well,
Where neither sin nor shame can dwell!
Even then Thine eye,
From heaven high,
Saw that her monitor was nigh;
At morn and even,
To turn to Heaven
The grateful eye, for blessings given.
And from the first prevailing tide
Of sin, and vanity, and pride,
To save her, and to lead her on
To glories unreveal'd, unknown.

"Onward we came; life's streamlet then
Enter'd a green and odorous glen;
Increased, and through fair flowerets rolling,
And shady bowers, seem'd past controlling;
Flowing, 'mid roses, fast and free—
This was a trying stage for me!

The maiden's youthful heart began
To dance through scenes Elysian;
To breathe in Love's ambrosial dew,
Moved by sensations sweet and new:
For, without look or word of blame,
Her radiant blushes went and came;
Her eye, of heaven's own azure blue,
In glance and lustre brighter grew:
Shewing fond feelings, all akin
To that pure soul which lived within.

"With heart so soft and soul sincere,
Love found his way by eye and ear.
Then how I labour'd, day and night,
To watch her ways, and guide her right!
I brought cool airs from Paradise
To purify her melting sighs;
I steep'd my veil in heaven's own spring,
And o'er her watch'd on silent wing;
And, when she laid her down to rest,
I spread the veil o'er her virgin breast:
All earthly passions far did flee,
And heart and soul she turn'd to Thee.

"Throughout her life
Of wedded wife,
I wean'd her soul from passion's strife;
But oh! what fears
And frequent tears
For the peril of childhood's tender years!
And when her firstborn's feeble moan
Was hush'd by the soul's departing groan;
In that hour of maternal grief,
I pointed her way to the sole relief.
Another sweet babe there came and went—
Her gushing eyes she fix'd, and bent
Upon that mansion bright and sweet,
Where sever'd and kindred spirits meet.

"She has wept for the living, and wept for the dead,
Laid low in the grave her husband's head;
She has toil'd for bread with the hands of age,
And, through her useful pilgrimage,
Has seen her race sink, one by one—
All, all she loved—yet, left and lone,
With cheer unchanged, with heart unshook,
On God she fix'd her steadfast look.

And now with the eye of purest faith,
She sees, beyond the vale of death,
A day that has no cloud or shower—
She has less dread of her parting hour,
Than ever had babe of its mother's breast,
When it lays its innocent head to rest.

"Oh! Maker of Earth, dread Ruler above,
Receive her spirit, her faith approve!
A tenderer mother, a nobler wife,
Ne'er waged, 'gainst earth and its sorrows, strife;
I never can bid a form arise
With purer heart than hers to the skies."

The Carle was moved with holy fear,
That lovely seraph's sweet song to hear;
He turn'd away and he cover'd his head,
For over him fell a visible dread,
While she gave her form to the breeze away,
That came from the vales of immortal day;
And sung her hymns far over the same,
And heavenly HOPE was the Seraph's name:

The guide to a land of rest and bliss,
To a sinless world—how unlike this!

To earth's blest pilgrim, old and gray,
The gate dissolved like a cloud away;
And the grim old Carle he veil'd his face,
As she pass'd him by with a holy pace;
With a touch of his hand and a whisper mild,
He soothed her heart as one stills a child.
The song of faith she faintly sung,
And God's dread name was last on her tongue.

Now from the pall, bright and sublime,
That hangs o'er the uttermost skirts of time,
Came righteous Souls, and Shapes more bright,
Clothed in glory and walking in light;
Majestic Beings of earthly frame,
And of heavenly radiance, over the same:
To welcome the Pilgrim of this gross clime,
They had come from Eternity back to Time—
And they sung, while they wafted her on the road,
"Come, righteous creature, and dwell with God!"

THE LAIRD OF LUN.

THERE was a man of muckle might,
His name was Lowrie, Laird of Lun,
Who held the loudest brag of weir,
Of man that ever battle won.

He beat MacKillum lance to lance,
He beat Gilfillan of the dale;
And, at the tilts and tournaments,
He down'd our gallants all and haill.

His falchion was the fire-flaught's gleam,
His spear the streamer of the sun;
So that the champions stood aloof,
And quail'd before the Laird of Lun.

Then he rode east and he rode west,
Braving each bauld upsetting man:
There never was a knight so proud,
Since this proud world at first began.

But there lived a maiden in the Merse,
She was the flower of Fair Scotland,
And she had many lands and rents,
And an earldom, at her command.

But yet she would not yield to wed,
Nor trust her heritage to man;
And when the lords came sighing sad,
She linkit at her wheel and span;

And on them pass'd her merry jokes,
Pitying their case right woefullye;
But bade them seek another spouse,
For a married wife she would not be.

But down came Lowrie, Laird of Lun,
To carry the maiden, lands and all;
He knew she never could disdain
A lover so gallant, brave, and tall.

His armour was so dazzling bright,
That eyne could hardly look thereon;
He seem'd array'd in burnish'd gold;
But all was never gold that shone.

His saddle-cloth wauff'd in the wind,
With golden tassels cover'd o'er;
His steed he caper'd like a hind,
And rear'd with his broadside before.

And when he rappit at Landale yett,
No porter stern was to be seen;
But a pretty may came to the yett,
And the blink of glee was in her eyne.

Then the Laird he made his horse to rear,
And the beast he snorted awsomelye:
"If Maiden Mariote is within,
Go bid her speak a word with me:

"For I am the mighty Laird of Lun,
The hero of the Scottish land;
And I am comed in courtesye,
To claim your winsome lady's hand."

And then he made his horse to spang,
As though he would not reined be,
Quhill the gravel flew like bullet showers—
It was ane gallant sight to see!

The maiden squeel'd, and keikit by,—
"Och, sir! my leddy is at her wheel,
And she must spin her daily task,
Else she and I can ne'er do weel.

"She is a poor but thrifty dame,
Who worketh out her daily bread,
And hath no time to jaulk with one
That carrieth so high a head.

"When you can work with spade and shool,
Or drive a trade of honest fame,
Then come and woo my lady dear;
Till then speed back the gate you came."

Then the Laird of Lun he thought it good
To take this cunning may's advice;
For a woman working for her bread
For him to wed would not be wise.

So he turn'd his horse's head about,
Who neither spang'd nor caper'd now,
But the plumes upon the Laird's helmet
They nodded dourly o'er his brow.

Then he has gone to the Lord of March,
And he has told him all his tale;
And that good lord he laugh'd at him,
Quhill both his sides were like to fail.

Quod he, "It was the May hersell,
I know it by her saucy say;
But go you back, and court her well:
She may not, cannot say you nay.

"And she has Landale tower and town,
Whitfield, and Kell, and Halsington;
Her very tithe of yearly rents
Would purchase all the lands of Lun."

The Laird he mounted his gallant steed,
And stately on his saddle set,
He never stinted the light gallop
Until he came to the Landale yett.

He gave his steed until ane man,
And stately strode into the hall,
Resolved to win that lady fair,
And her broad lands,—the best of all.

And there he stood, and there he strode,
And often sent he ben his name;
But, all that he could say or do,
They would not bid him to the dame.

For the merry may she jink'd and jeer'd,
And the auld footman girn'd amain;
But the Laird he would not move one foot,
But manfully he did remain.

At length May Mariote she came down,
Like a bright angel come from heaven,
And ask'd him how he dared intrude
Into a maiden's bower at even?

Quod he, "My dear and comely dame,
I hither come to make demand
Of what is well my right to ask,—
Your maiden heart but and your hand.

" For I am the hero of Fair Scotland;
No knight can stand before mine arms:
And well it suits the fairest dame
To yield the hero up her charms."

" If you be the hero of Fair Scotland,
Then woe to Scotland and to me!
There is not a man on all my land
That would not tame your gallantrye.

" You have caper'd at the tournaments,
And broken a spear in lady's sight;
But there is not a knight of noble blood
With gladiator bows to fight.

" To meet our meanest Borderer's might—
The men whose daily work is strife—
Would let you know what fighting is,
And ply your heels for death or life."

The Laird he trampit with his foot,
Quhill all the halls of Landale rung;
" Madam," quod he, " were you a man,
You should repent your wicked tongue.

" There is my pledge, now take it up
As frankly as you see it thrown,
And, if you have an hero in Fair Scotland,
I pledge my life to bring him down!"

" I lift the gauntlet," said the dame;
" To-morrow come to thy dejeune,
And pass thou forth to east or west,
Or north or south, as suits thy tune,

" And the first man thou meetest with,
Give him a challenge manfullye,
And fight him on the very spot;
Then come and tell the news to me.

" If thou canst bring the first two down,
Either on horseback or on foot,
I pledge my maiden courtesy
To listen to thine honest suit.

" You little know the Mersemen's might,
Bred unto battle's deadliest blee;
There is not a man on all my land
Who will not bring you to your knee."

Then the Laird pull'd off his feather'd cap,
And thrice he waved it round his head,
And he utter'd such a lordly shout
As nearly struck that lady dead.

"Hurrah!" cried he, "for lucky me!
Now let the skaith go with the scorn;
The fairest may in all the South,
And her braid lands, are mine the morn!"

The Laird he came to his dejeune,
And loud he braggit of his weir;
But such a bleeze of wicked wit
The heart of man did never bear.

The Laird then mounted his gallant steed,
And forth unto the west rode he,
Where he was aware of ane Beggar man
Coming slowly slodging o'er the lea.

Then the Laird he thought unto himsell,
"This is the wark will never do;
If I should fight a beggar man,
For life I shall have cause to rue.

" But yet it was her strict behest,
And missing him I lose my plea;
But to bring down a leal auld man
Befits not hero's courtesye."

The Beggar he came loutching on;
His head it shook, his step was frail,
His shoulders bended like a bow,
His beard was like a white mare's tail.

He had wallets behind, and wallets before,
That waggit about him wonder well;
But what was in his clouted bonnet
There was nobody knew but the Beggar himsell.

He pull'd off his bonnet unto the Laird,
And speirit ane aumos churlishlye;
Then the Laird gave him a twalpenny piece,
With an air of might and majestye.

And then he turn'd him round about,
Saying, " Tell to me, thou beggar knave,
Didst thou ever fight in field of blood,
Or battle ane foeman hand to glaive?"

" Yes, I have fought in single fight,
And in the front of battle keen,
And I have stood on field of blood,
Where gossip like thee durst not be seen."

" What would you think, then, beggar knave,
With me to try your mettle here?"
" Deil tak the hindmost," the Beggar said,
" If I had borrow'd the miller's mare!"

Then the beggar he got the miller's mare,
As good a beast as beggar could hae;
His bridle was the hairy halter,
His saddle was the sonk of strae.

But such a buirdlie warrior make
Never dash'd forth to deeds of weir;
He seem'd to wax in size and shape
When mounted on the miller's mare:

He had wallets behind, and wallets before,
And wallets outower his shoulders had he;
You might as well pierce a pack of woo,
As try to pierce his fair bodye.

He heaved his pikit staff on high,
And gallop'd on, and cried, " Wellhee!"
And his wallets wauff'd like twenty wings,
That even a fearsome sight was he!

But the Laird's horse could not stand the sight,
His very soul did quake for dread,
For he rear'd and snorted like ane whale,
And nearly fell'd his master dead;

And or the Beggar reach'd the place,
By forty ells, as I heard say,
The horse, in spite of bit and spur,
Wheel'd off, and fled like fire away.

But the miller's mare was a mare of breed,
And better mare nor miller behoved;
For all the war-steed's horrid dread,
A fleeter better yaud she proved:

For the Beggar pursued, shouting " Wellhee!"
And hard came on the battle steed;
Then he wan the Laird a sturdy thwack,
That dang his helmet off his head;

And round and round the Landale Tower
They gallop'd on with might and main,
While May Mariote, and all her maids,
Laugh'd as they never laugh'd again.

And round and round the Landale Tower
The Laird and his pursuer flew;
And the wallets daddit round and round,
And raised the stour at every hew;

And many a hard and heavy knoll
Fell on the rump of the war steed,
Whilom the brave horse groan'd and ran,
Holding out his tail, and eke his head.

Then would the Beggar wheel about,
To meet the Laird's horse face to face;
But the horse no sooner the Beggar saw,
Than, spite of death, he turn'd the chace.

And round and round the Landale Tower,
For the outer gates were barr'd amain;
And such a chace in such a place,
Lady shall never behold again.

Till the Laird, in black despair and rage,
Flung himself fiercely from his steed,
Then threw the bridle from his grasp,
Swearing to be the Beggar's dead.

But foot to foot, and hand to hand,
The Beggar met him gallantlye;
At the first buff the Beggar gat,
The stour like ane snaw drift did flee,
And it flew into the Laird's two eyne,
Till feint a stime the Laird could see;

But whether it came from pepper pock,
Or beggar's pouch, he could not tell,
But it was as hot and sharp to bear,
As ashes from the grate of hell.

Then the Beggar he laugh'd ane wicked laugh,
As the Laird he jumpit like one possess'd,
And the Beggar had nothing more to do
But to lay on as liked him best.

He thwackit the Laird, and he daddit the Laird,
And he cloutit him quhill in woeful plight.
"You gave me an aumos," the Beggar said,
"So I'll not take thine life outright.

" But betide me weel, betide me woe,
Thy glittering garb shall go with me,
To teach thee challenge an humble beggar,
Who was not troubling thine nor thee."

He tirl'd the Laird unto the buff,
And busked himself in his finerye,
Then belted on his noble brand,
And wow but a jolly beggar was he!

But he left the Laird his pikit kent,
His powder'd duds, and pocks of meal—
Oh! never was wooer so hard bested,
Or a haughty heart brought down so weel!

He hath clothed himself in the Beggar's duds,
No other remede had he the while;
But his horse would not let him come near—
No, not within a half a mile.

But where he fled, or where he sped,
I never could learn with all my lore,
But he never set up his face again,
And never was seen in Scotland more.

But woe be to that May Mariote!—
What's to be won at woman's hand?—
For she has wedded that Beggar knave,
And made him lord of all her land!

For who was he but the Knight of Home,
The dread of all the Border bounds,
Whom that cunning May had warned weel
To watch the Laird in all his rounds.

And the pretended miller's mare
Was the ae best beast that ever was born;
Oft had she broke the English ranks,
And laid their leaders all forlorn.

May never ane braggard bruik the glaive
That best befits a noble hand—
And every lover lose the dame
Who goes her favour to command!*

* The hero of this legend seems to have been Sir Alexander, the tenth knight of Home; for, on consulting the registers of that family, I find that he was married to Mariote, or Marriotta, sole daughter and heiress of Landale of Landale, in the county of Berwick.

RINGAN AND MAY.

I HEARD a laverock singing with glee,
And oh but the bird sang cheerilye;
Then I askit at my true love Ringan,
If he kend what the bonny bird was singing?

Now, my love Ringan is blith and young,
But he has a fair and flattering tongue;
And oh, I'm fear'd I like ower weel
His tales of love, though kind and leal!
So I said to him, in scornful ways,
"You ken no word that wee burd says!"

Then my love he turn'd about to me,
And there was a smile in his pawky ee;

And he says, " My May, my dawtied dow,
I ken that strain far better nor you;
For that little fairy that lilts so loud,
And hangs on the fringe of the sunny cloud,
Is telling the tale, in chants and chimes,
I have told to thee a thousand times.
I will let thee hear how our strains accord,
And the laverock's sweet sang, word for word:

Interpretation of the Lark's Song.

' Oh, my love is bonny, and mild to see,
As sweetly she sits on her dewy lea,
And turns up her cheek and clear gray eye,
To list what's saying within the sky!
For she thinks my morning hymn so sweet,
Wi' the streamers of Heaven aneath my feet,
Where the proud goshawk could never won,
Between the gray cloud and the sun,—
And she thinks her love a thing of the skies,
Sent down from the holy Paradise,
To sing to the world, at morn and even,
The sweet love songs in the bowers of Heaven.

'O my love is bonny, and young, and chaste,
As sweetly she sits in her mossy nest!
And she deems the birds on bush and tree,
As nothing but dust and droul to me.
Though the robin warble his waesome chirl,
And the merle gar all the greenwood dirl,
And the storm-cock touts on his towering pine,
She trows their songs a mock to mine;
The linty's cheip a ditty tame,
And the shillfa's everlasting rhame;
The plover's whew a solo drear,
And the whilly-whaup's ane shame to hear;
And, whenever a lover comes in view,
She cowers beneath her screen of dew.

'O my love is bonny! her virgin breast
Is sweeter to me nor the dawning east;
And well do I like, at the gloaming still,
To dreep from the lift or the lowering hill,
And press her nest as white as milk,
And her breast as soft as the downy silk.'"

Now when my love Ringan had warbled away
To this base part of the laverock's lay,

My heart was like to burst in twain,
And the tears flow'd from mine eyne like rain;
At length he said, with a sigh full lang,
"What ails my love at the laverock's sang?"

Says I, "He's ane base and wicked bird,
As ever rose from the dewy yird;
It's a shame to mount on his morning wing,
At the yetts of heaven sic sangs to sing;
And all to win, with his amorous din,
A sweet little virgin bird to sin,
And wreck, with flattery and song combined,
His dear little maiden's peace of mind!
Oh, were I her, I would let him see,
His songs should all be lost on me!"

Then my love took me in his arms,
And 'gan to laud my leifou charms;
But I would not so much as let him speak,
Nor stroke my chin, nor kiss my cheek:
For I fear'd my heart was going wi' saug,
It was so moved at the laverock's sang.

Yet still I lay with an upcast ee,
And still he was singing sae bonnilye,
That, though with my mind I had great strife,
I could not forbear it for my life,
But, as he hung on the heaven's brow,
I said, I ken not why, nor how,
" What's that little deevil saying now ?"

Then my love Ringan, he was so glad,
He leugh till his folly pat me mad ;
And he said, " My love, I will tell you true,
He seems to sing that strain to you ;
For it says, ' I will range the yird and air
To feed my love with the finest fare ;
And when she looks from her bed to me,
With the yearning love of a mother's ee,
Oh, then I will come, and draw her nearer,
And watch her closer, and love her dearer,
And we never shall part till our dying day,
But love and love on for ever and aye !"

' Then my heart it bled with a thrilling pleasure,
When it learn'd the laverock's closing measure,

And it rose, and rose, and would not rest,
And would hardly bide within my breast.
Then up I rose, and away I sprung,
And said to my love, with scornful tongue,
That it was ane big and burning shame;
That he and the lark were both to blame;
For there were some lays so soft and bland
That breast of maiden could not stand;
And, if he lay in the wood his lane,
Quhill I came back to list the strain
Of an amorous bird amang the broom,
Then he might lie quhill the day of doom!

But for all the sturt and strife I made;
For all I did, and all I said,
Alas! I fear it will be lang
Or I forget that wee burd's sang!
And langer still or I can flee
The lad that told that sang to me!

THE GROUSOME CARLE.

THERE was a man came out of the West,
And an uncouth Carle was he,
For the bowzelly hair upon his head
Was pirled with his dark eebree.

And the feint a brow had this Carle ava,
That mortal man could see,
For all, from his nose to his shoulder blade
Was duffled right fearsomelye.

And he neither had bonnet, hose, nor shoon,
Nor sark, nor trews, had he,
But a short buff jerkin round his waist,
That hardly reach'd his knee.

And he had a belt of the good bull's hide,
And a buckle of iron had he,
And he bore a pole on his shoulder,
Was ten long feet and three.

As he came up by the Craigieburn,
With stalwart step and free,
He lookit up to the Saddle-Yoke,
As he would take wings to flee;

And aye he cuist his burly head
To fling the hair from his ee;
And he hemm'd, and he snocker'd so awsome loud,
That the leaves shook on the tree;

And the little wee birds held up their necks,
And made their crops full sma',
And, till that Carle was out of sight,
A breath they durst not draw.

And the woodman grippit to his long bill,
Thinking his life was gone,
And ran behind the hazel bush,
Till the stalwart Carle pass'd on.

And the deers took to their heels and ran,
With their noses from the wind,
And, till they wan to Carryfron Gans,
They never look'd them behind.

And the very dogs of the shepherd lads
Were seized with burning dread,
For they took their tails between their houghs,
And made to the braes with speed:

And they shot out their crookit tongues,
In length more than a span,
And laid their lugs back to their necks,
And whinkit as they ran.

And the owsen cockit their stupid heads,
And switch'd their tails full long,
And aye they caper'd round and round,
And wist not what was wrong.

And aye when the Carle gave a yowte,
Or snocker'd with belch and bray,
Then all the rocks play'd clatter again,
And nicher'd for miles away.

And the wedders started on the steep,
Or scour'd alongst the lea,
And the little wee kids rose from their lairs,
And blette most eldrichlye.

But if this Carle was flesh and blood,
Or a monster come from hell,
Or risen out of the deeps of the sea,
No man in the land could tell.

But siccan a day, and siccan a fray,
Or siccan a frightsome tale,
Never put that country in dismay,
Since men knew Annerdale.

For it was said a horrid train
Had pass'd, at the break of day,
Of monsters hasting out of the West,
And bound for the fells away.

The Carle he came to the Gray-Mare's Linn,
Beneath the roaring steep,
And he howkit a hole, like bended bow,—
A trench both long and deep.

And he pull'd the braken from the slack,
The heather from the hill,
The rowan-tree from the Strang-Cleuch Linn,
And the birk of the Raken Gill;

And seven Scots ells of that deep hole,
He cover'd up carefullye:
And there he lay, with his horrid crew,
Unseen by mortal ee;
For no man durst come nigh that houff,
For the life of his bodye.

But the owsen sauntit from the holms,
The wedders from the brae;
Quhill the shepherds grumbled through the land,
And wist not what to say;

Young maids were missing from their beds,
Before the break of the day;
And mothers rock'd their toom cradles,
For the bairnies had elyit away.

But word is gone east, and word is gone west,
From Yarrow unto the Ae;
And came to the Lord of Annerdale,
At Lochouse where he lay.

That Lord he laugh'd at his vassalmen's tale,
And he said full jocundlye,
I will wend to the Gray-Mare's Linn the morn,
This Grousome Carle to see.

Lord Annerdale rose at the screigh of the day,
And mounted his berry-brown steed,
With four-and-twenty wale wight men,
To guard him in time of need,

And three staunch bloodhounds at his heel,
Of the terrible Border brood,
That weel could track the midnight thief,
Or the shedder of Christian blood.

And when he came to the Hunter-Heck,
Oh, there was a grievous maen,
For something was missing over night,
That could not be told again.

But he loosed the leashes of his bloodhounds,
That look'd both dour and droye,
For they neither row'd them on the sward,
Nor scamper'd round for joy.

But they snokit the dew, and snokit the dew,
And snokit it o'er again,
And the birses rase upon their backs,
Brush'd like a wild boar's mane.

Then Jowler he begoud to youff,
With a short and an angry tone,
And German's ee begoud to glent,
With a blood-red glare thereon;

But Harper he turn'd his flew to the heavens,
And he gave a tout so lang,
That all the woods in Moffat-dale,
With mou'less echoes rang.

That was the true and the warning note,—
Away went the hounds amain!
And away went the horsemen them behind,
With spur and with steady rein!

But the fords were deep, and the banks were steep,
And pathway there was none;
And or they wan to the Selcoth Burn,
The brave bloodhounds were gone.

But they heard the echoes dinnling on,
Along the clouds so calm,
As gin the Spirits of the Fells
Were singing their morning psalm.

And the eagle left his misty hame,
Amidst the cliffs so grim,
And he belted the morning's ruddy brow,
And join'd in the bloody hymn.

"Spur on, spur on," cried Annerdale,
"Lest evil mine hounds betide.
Gin the reiver's hide were made of ern,
A riving it maun bide."

When they came up to the Gray-Mare's Linn,
To the trench both deep and lang,
Lord Annerdale's steed turn'd round his head,—
No farther he docht gang:

But aye he scrapit, and he snored,
And lookit with wild dismay,
And fain would have spoken to his master;
But could not get word to say.

" Who holds this hole," cried Annerdale,
" This den of dread and doubt?
Gin ye be creatures of mortal birth,
I summon you to come out."

He heard a snocker, and then a laugh,
And then a smother'd scream,
As if the Devil had been asleep,
And waken'd out of a dream.

And the three bloodhounds they youlit aloud,
When they heard their master's voice;
For they were chain'd within the cave;
And frightsome grew the noise.

But out then came the Grousome Carle,
And up on his trench stood he,
And his towzlie head it kythit as high
As the hill of Turnberrye.

Lord Annerdale had not word to say,
For his heart it beat so fast;
And, though he put great courage on,
He stood full sore aghast.

And aye he lookit at the Carle's make,
And then at his pigmy men's—
They were no more before his face
Then a scrow of cocks and hens.

"Christ be my shield!" said Lord Annerdale,
"For, as my faith shall thrive,
If ten such carles were in the land,
They would swallow it up alive!"

"What seek you here?" quod the giant Carle,
"Or what is your will with me?"
"We seek for owsen, sheep, and kye,
And eke for ane fair ladye!"

"You shall have their bones then," said the Carle;
"You shall have them with right good will,
When my gude dames and noble sons
Have gnaw'd at them their fill."

"Lord be my shield!" quoth Annerdale,
"And save me from skaith and scorn!
For the like of that I never heard,
From the day that I was born.

"Loose forth my hounds, thou base reiver!
If rackle thou wouldst not be."
"Loth would I be," the Carle replied,
"For either your gold or fee.

"They will bring down the stot but and the steer,
The wedder and the fleet hind;
Or be dejune to my gude dames,
When better they may not find."

Lord Annerdale he waxed wroth,—
Such thoughts he could not thole,—
And he vow'd to shed the Carle's blood,
And bury him in his hole.

"Art thou for battle?" the Carle replied;
"That thing rejoiceth me;
For it will please our stomachs to feast
On thy fat men and thee."

He bore a pole on his shoulder
Was ten large feet and three,
And out of that he thrust a spear,
Most dreadful for to see.

Lord Annerdale's men drew out their brands,
And flew on the Carle amain;
But, in five twinklings of an ee,
A third of them lay slain.

The rest wheel'd round their steeds and fled,
Swift as the westlin wind;
But some they quaked and stood aghast,
When looking them behind:

For there they saw both wives and bairns,
Of frightsome giant brood,
Come running out of the horrid hole,
And drink their kinsmen's blood.

And aye they quaff'd the red warm tide,
Their greed it was so rife,
Then trail'd the bodies into the hole,
Though fleckering still with life.

Lord Annerdale's men they rode and ran
O'er all the Border boun'
Till they found out John of Littledean,
Ane archer of great renoune.

He came to the Gray-Mare's Linn o'ernight,
And dernit him dexterouslye,
And there he watch'd for the Grousome Carle,
To walk on his bloody lea.

When he had taken his horrid meal,
Too base whereon to think,
Then strode he down unto the stream
To take his morning drink;

And John he look'd outower his den,
And saw the monster lie;
And the little fishes swattering away,—
For they thought the stream gone dry.

The Carle he rose up like ane tree,
And took his steadfast stand,
For he beheld our good yeoman,
With bent bow in his hand.

He durst not turn him round to fly,
Though much he had a mind,
For he knew the fleet and flying shaft
Would pierce his heart behind.

Our yeoman sent an arrow fleet,
From bow of the good yew tree;
But the Carle keppit it in his teeth,
As easily as a flee.

Another and another flew,
With as much might and speed;
But still he keppit them in his teeth,
And chew'd them for a meed.

But John he was a cunning man,
He seys his skill again—
He put two arrows to his bow,
And drew with might and main:

The Carle deftly caught the ane
Full fiercely as it flew;
But the other pierced him through the breast,
And clave his heart in two.

He gave a growl—he gave but ane,
It made all the hills to roar;
Then down he fell on the Peele-Knowe side,
And word spoke never more.

Then up rose the Lord of Annerdale
From an ambush where he lay,
And he sack'd the Carle's grousome hole,
And herried it for a prey.

But, oh! the sight was there display'd,
Of horror and of pain,
Lord grant that the men of Annerdale
May never behold again!

For such a wild and savage scene
By bard had never been sung;
It would not sing, it would not say,
By any Christian tongue.

They took the Carle's menzie brood,
His sons, and his wives three;
And they fankit tows about their necks,
And hang'd them on a tree;

Then took them to their grousome hole,
For their last horrid room;
And the Giant's Trench and the Giant's Grave
Will kythe till the day of doom.

Now, long live James, our noble King,
And Lord Annerdale, long live he,
And long live John of Littledean,
Wha set this country free!

Some said those giants were brutal beasts,
And souls they could have none:
Some said they had; but shook their heads,
And wonder'd where they were gone.

Till Peter of Bodsbeck he came forth,
With proofs of the very best,
That put an end to the dispute,
And set the land at rest:

For Peter was out at eventide,
Upon his heights, I wot,
And Peter's eyne could see full well,
What other men's could not.

So Peter beheld ane flock of deils,
Like grievous hoody-craws,
And ilk ane had a giant's soul
A-writhing in its claws.

They flew as they were bound to hell,
Swift as the fiery flame,
But they drappit the fiends in Galloway,
The place from whence they came:

They flew ower bonny Annerdale,
And ower the Nith they flew;
But they drappit the souls in Galloway,
As the best hell they knew.

May Heaven preserve both man and beast
That tread this yird below,
And little bairns, and maidens fair,
And grant them grace to grow;

And may never ane rude uncouthly guest
Come their blest bowers within;
And never ane carle be seen again
Like him of the Gray-Mare's Linn!

LOVE'S JUBILEE.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Lovely Spirit, where dost thou fly,
With such impatience in thine eye?—
Behold the hues of the closing day
Are mingled still with the gloaming gray;
And thine own sweet star of the welkin sheen—
The Star of Love—is but faintly seen,—
See how she hangs, like a diamond dim,
By the walks of the holy Seraphim;
While the fays, in the middle vales of blue,
Have but half distill'd their freight of dew:
It is too early in the night
For a Spirit so lovely and so bright
To be tracing the walks of the world beneath,
Unhallow'd by sin, and mildew'd by death;

Where madness and folly are ever rife,
And snares that beleaguer mortal life.
I know thee well, sweet Spirit of Love,
And I know thy mission from above;
Thou comest, with every grace refined
To endow the earthly virgin's mind;
A record of her virtues to keep,
And all her thoughts, awake and asleep.
Bright Spirit, thou hast a charge of care!
Come tarry with me, in this woodland fair;
I will teach thee more, in one hour of joy,
Than all thou hast learn'd since thou left'st the sky:
Come, tarry with me; let the maidens be,
Till the hour of dreaming and phantasye;
And then will I wend with thee, to share
The task of fanning their foreheads fair,
And scaring the little fays of sin
That tickle the downy dimpling chin;
That prank with the damask vein of the cheek,
And whisper words it were wrong to speak.
From all these foes thy wards shall be free,
If thou wilt go woo in the wood with me,
Till yon twin stars hang balanced even,
Like ear-rings on the cheeks of heaven.

SECOND SPIRIT.

And who art thou, that, with shameless brow,
Darest here such licence to avow?
If aright I judge from what I 've heard,
This courtesy might well be spared;
For, of all the Spirits beneath the sun,
Thou art the one that I most would shun!
Art thou not he, of guardian fame,
That watchest over the sex supreme?
Say, Spirit, was the charge not given
To thee, before the throne of heaven,
To guard the youth of this vale from sin,
From follies without, and foibles within?
If so, thou hast honour of thy trade!
A glorious guardian hast thou made!
To the dole and the danger of mine and me,—
My malison light on it and thee!—
Go woo with thee! by this heavenly mind,
I had rather go woo with a mortal hind.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Sweet Spirit, sure thou couldst never opine
That my charge could be as pure as thine?
Something for sex thou shouldst allow;
Yet have I done what spirit might do,

And more will I still, if thou wilt go rest,
With me on the wild thyme's fragrant breast,
By form of an angel never prest!
I will spread thee a couch of the violet blue,
Of our own heaven's cerulean hue;
The sweetest flowers shall round thee be strew'd,
And I'll pillow thy head on the gossamer's shroud;
And there, 'neath the green leaves closely furl'd,
I will cool thy cheek with the dew of the world,
I will bind thy locks with the sweet woodreef,
And fan thy brow with the wabron leaf;
I will press thy heaving heart to mine,
And try to mix with our love divine
An earthly joy, a mortal bliss;
I will woo thee, and woo thee, for a kiss,
As a thing above all gifts to prize,
And I'll swear 'tis the odour of Paradise!
In earthly love, when ardent and chaste,
There's a joy which angels scarce may taste:
Then come to the bower I have framed for thee;
We'll let the youth of the vale go free,
And this eve shall be LOVE'S JUBILEE.

SECOND SPIRIT.

I will not, I dare not, such hazard run;
My virgin race may be all undone.

The breeze is chill—it is wearing late—
Away, thou guardian profligate!

FIRST SPIRIT.

Sweet Spirit, why that quivering lip,
Which an angel of life might love to sip?
And why doth thy radiance come and go,
Like the hues of thine own celestial bow?
And why dost thou look to the ground and sigh,
And away from the greenwood turn thine eye?
Are these the symptoms, may I divine,
Of an earthly love?—and is it mine?

SECOND SPIRIT.

Ah no! it is something about my head,
Some qualm of languor or of dread.
That breeze is surely in a glow?
And yet it is chill—What shall I do?
Wilt thou not go? Ah, haste away
Unto thy charge; thou art worse than they.

FIRST SPIRIT.

I will not, cannot, leave thee so;
I must woo thee whether thou wilt or no.
Let us hide from the star-beam, and the gale,—
Why dost thou tremble, and look so pale?

SECOND SPIRIT.

Oh, my dear maidens, of beauty so bright,
What will become of you all to-night!
For I fear me this eve of wizard spell
May be, by shade, by bower, and dell,
" An eve to dream of, not to tell."

FIRST SPIRIT.

I will charge the little elves of sin
To keep their silken cells within,—
In the night flower's breast, the witch bell blue,
Or wrapt in the daisy's silver flue;
And not to warp, on any pretence,
The thoughts or the dreams of innocence.
There shall not one of them dare to sip
The dew of love from the fervid lip,
Till the sleeping virgin, pale and wan,
Shrink back as if from the kiss of man.
There shall no elfin, unreproved,
Take the dear form of the youth beloved!
Or whisper of love within the ear
A word for maiden unmeet to hear.
From man's deep wiles thy sex I'll guard,
If a smile from thine eye may be my reward;

For all beside, we must let them be;
And this eve shall be LOVE'S JUBILEE.

The guardian angel of virgin fame,
In one sweet dale which I may not name,
Was won, for that dear eve, to prove
The thrilling joys of earthly love:
And if by matron the truth was said,
There was ne'er such an eve since the stars were made,
For young delight, and for moments bright,
And all that could virtuous love requite;
For all was holy, and pure, and chaste,
As the angels that woo'd in their home of rest.
The welkin glow'd with a rosy blue,
And its Star of Love had a brighter hue;
The greenwood strains with joy were rife,
And its breeze was a balm of heavenly life,
Aye!—'twas an eve, by bower and dell,—
"An eve to dream of, not to tell:"
For ever hallow'd may it be,
That eve of LOVE'S HIGH JUBILEE!

THE SPIRIT OF THE GLEN.

" O DEAREST Marjory, stay at home,
For dark's the gate you have to go;
And there's a maike adown the glen,
'Hath frighten'd me and many moe.

" His legs are like two pillars tall,
And still and stalwart is his stride;
His face is rounder nor the moon,
And, och, his mouth is awsome wide!

" I saw him stand, the other night,
Yclothed in his grizly shroud;
With one foot on a shadow placed,
The other on a misty cloud.

" As far asunder were his limbs,
On the first storey of the air,
A ship could have sail'd through between,
With all her colours flying fair.

" He nodded his head against the heaven,
As if in reverend mockerye;
Then fauldit his arms upon his breast,
And aye he shook his beard at me.

" And he pointed to my Marjory's cot,
And by his motion seem'd to say,
' In yon sweet home go seek thy lot,
For there thine earthly lot I lay.'

" My very heart it quaked for dread,
And turn'd as cold as beryl stone;
And the moudies cheipit below the swaird,
For fear their little souls were gone.

" The cushat and the corbie craw
Fled to the highest mountain height;
And the little birdies tried the same,
But fell down on the earth with fright.

" But there was ane shameful heronshew,
Was sitting by the plashy shore,
With meagre eyne watching powheads,
And other fishes, less or more;

" But when she saw that grizly sight
Stand on the billow of the wind;
Grace, as she flapper'd and she flew,
And left a streamoury track behind!

" And aye she rair'd as she were wud,
For utter terror and dismay;
And left a skelloch on the clud,—
I took it for the milky way.

" Had I not seen that hideous sight,
What I had done I could not say;
But at that heron's horrid fright,
I'll laugh until my dying day.

" Then, dearest Marjory, stay at home,
And rather court a blink with me;
For, gin you see that awsome sight,
Yourself again you will never be."

" But I have made a tryst this night,
I may not break, if take my life;
So I will run my risk and go:
With maiden, spirits have no strife.

" Have you not heard, Sir Dominie,
That face of virgin bears a charm,
And neither ghaist, nor man, nor beast,
Have any power to do her harm?"

" Yes, there is one, sweet Marjorye,
Will stand thy friend in darksome even;
For virgin beauty is on earth
The brightest type we have of heaven.

" The colly cowers upon the swaird,
To kiss her foot with kindly eye;
The maskis will not move his tongue,
But wag his tail, if she pass by;

" The adder hath not power to stang;
The slow-worm 's harmless as an eel:
The burly toad, the ask, and snake,
Cannot so much as wound her heel.

" The angels love to see her good,
And watch her ways in bower and hall;
The devils pay her some respect,
And God loves her,—that is best of all."

" Then, sooth, I'll take my chance, and wend
To keep my tryst, whate'er may be;
Why should a virtuous maiden dread
The tale of a crazy dominie?"

" Ochon, ochon, dear Marjorye,
But of your virtue you are vain!
Yet you are in a wondrous haste,
In running into toil and pain.

" For maiden's virtue, at the best,
(May He that made her kind, forgive her!)
Is like the blue-bell of the waste,
Sweet, sweet a while, and gone for ever!

" It is like what maiden much admires,—
A bruckle set of china store;
But one false stumble, start, or step,
And down it falls for evermore!

" It is like the florid Eden rose,
That perisheth without recalling;
And aye the lovelier that it grows,
It wears the nearer to the falling.

" It is like the flaunting morning sky,
That spreads its blushes far before;
But plash there comes a storm of rain,
And all its glory then is o'er.

" Then be not proud, sweet Marjorye,
Of that which hath no sure abode:
Man little knows what lurks within;
The heart is only known to God."

But Marjory smiled a willsome smile,
And drew her frock up to her knee;
And lightly down the glen she flew,
Though the tear stood in the Dominie's ee.

She had not gone a mile but ane,
Quhill up there starts a droichel man,
And he lookit ruefully in her face,
And says, " Fair maid, where be you gaun?"

"I am gaun to meet mine own true love,
So, Maister Brownie, say your rede;
I know you have not power to hurt
One single hair of virgin's head."

The Brownie gave a gousty laugh,
And said, "What wisdom you do lack!
For, if you reach your own true love,
I may have power when you come back!"

Then next she met an eldrin dame,
A weirdly witch I wot was she;
For though she wore a human face,
It was a grousome sight to see:

"Stay, pretty maid, what is your haste?
Come, speak with me before you go;
For I have news to tell to you,
Will make your very heart to glow:

"You claim that virgins have a charm,
That holds the universe at bay;
Alas! poor fool, to snare and harm,
There is none so liable as they.

" It is love that lifts up woman's soul,
And gives her eyes a heavenly sway;
Then, would you be a blessed thing,
Indulge in love without delay.

" You go to meet your own true love,
I know it well as well can be;
But, or you pass a bowshot on,
You will meet ane thrice as good as he.

" And he will press your lily hand,
And he will kiss your cheek and chin,
And you must go to bower with him,
For he is the youth your love must win.

" And you must do what he desires,
And great good fortune you shall find;
But when you reach your own true love,
Keep close your secret in your mind."

Away went Marjory, and away
With lighter step and blither smile;
That night to meet her own true love,
She would have gane a thousand mile.

She had not pass'd a bowshot on
Until a youth, in manly trim,
Came up and press'd the comely may
To turn into a bower with him.

He promised her a gown of silk,
A mantle of the cramosye,
And chain of gold about her neck,
For one hour of her companye.

He took her lily hand in his,
And kiss'd it with such fervencye,
That the poor may began to blush,
And durst not lift her modest ee.

Her little heart began to beat,
And flutter most disquietlye,
She lookit east, she lookit west,
And all to see what she could see.

She lookit up to Heaven aboon,
Though scarcely knowing how or why;
She heaved a sigh—the day was won,
And bright resolve beam'd in her eye.

The first stern that she look'd upon,
A tear stood on its brow for shame;
It drappit on the floor of Heaven,
And aye its blushes went and came.

Then Marjory, in a moment thought,
That blessed angels might her see;
And often said within her heart,
"Do God's own planets blush for me?

"That they shall never do again—
Leal virtue still shall be my guide.—
Thou stranger youth, pass on thy way,
With thee I will not turn aside.

"The Angel of the Glen is wroth,
And where shall maiden find remede?
See what a hideous canopy
He is spreading high above our head!"

"Take thou no dread, sweet Marjorye;
It is love's own curtain spread on high;
A timeous veil for maiden's blush,
Yon little crumb-cloth of the sky.

" All the good angels take delight
Sweet woman's happiness to see;
And where could thine be so complete
As in the bower this night with me?"

Poor Marjory durst no answer make,
But stood as meek as captive dove;
Her trust fix'd on her Maker kind,—
Her eyes upon the Heaven above.

That wicked wight (for sure no youth,
But Demon of the Glen was he)
Had no more power, but sped away,
And left the maiden on her knee.

Then, all you virgins sweet and young,
When the first whisperings of sin
Begin to hanker on your minds,
Or steal into the soul within,

Keep aye the eyes on Heaven aboon,
Both of your body and your mind;
For in the strength of God alone,
A woman's weakness strength shall find.

And when you go to bower or dell,
And know no human eye can see,
Think of an eye that never sleeps,
And angels weeping over thee.

For man is but a selfish maike,
And little recks of maiden's woe,
And all his pride is to advise
The gate she's far ower apt to go.

Away went bonny Marjorye,
With all her blossoms in the blight;
She had not gone a bowshot on,
Before she saw an awsome sight:

It was ane maike of monstrous might,
The terror of the sons of men;
That by Sir Dominie was hight,
The Giant Spirit of the Glen.

His make was like a moonshine cloud
That fill'd the glen with human form;
With his gray locks he brush'd the Heaven,
And shook them far aboon the storm;

And gurly, gurly was his look,
From eyne that seem'd two borels blue;
And shaggy was his silver beard
That down the air in streamers flew.

Oh, but that maid was hard bested,
And mazed and modderit in dismay!
For both the guests of heaven and hell
Seem'd her fond passage to belay.

When the Great Spirit saw her dread,
And that she wist not what to say,
His face assumed a milder shade,
Like midnight melting into day.

"Poor wayward, artless, aimless thing,
Where art thou going, canst thou tell?"
The Spirit said,—"Is it thy will
To run with open eyne to hell?

"I am the guardian of this glen,
And 'tis my sovereign joy to see
The wicked man run on in sin,
Rank, ruthless, gaunt, and greedilye;

" But still to guard the virtuous heart
From paths of danger and of woe,
Shall be my earnest, dearest part:
Then tell me, dame, where dost thou go?"

" I go to meet mine ain dear love,
True happiness with him to seek,—
The comeliest and kindest youth
That ever kiss'd a maiden's cheek."

The Spirit shook his silver hair,
That stream'd like sunbeam through the rain;
But there was pity in his eyne,
Though mingled with a mild disdain.

He whipp'd the maid up in his arms
As I would lift a trivial toy—
Quod he, " The upshot thou shalt see
Of this most pure and virtuous joy!"

He took two strides, he took but two,
Although ane mile it seem'd to be,
And shew'd the maid her own true love,
With maiden weeping at his knee;

And, oh; that maiden's heart was sore,
For still with tears she wet his feet;
But then he mock'd and jeer'd the more,
With threats, and language most unmeet.

She cried, "Oh, dear and cruel youth,
Think of the love you vow'd to me,
And all the joys that we have proved,
Beneath the bield of birken tree!

"Since never maid hath loved like me,
Leave me not to the world's sharp scorn;
By your dear hand I'll rather die
Than live forsaken and forlorn!"

"As thou hast said so shalt thou dree,"
Said this most cursed and cruel hind;
"For I must meet ane may this night,
Whom I love best of womankind;

"So I'll let forth thy wicked blood,
And neither daunt, nor rue the deed,
For thou art lost to grace and good,
And ruin'd beyond all remede."

She open'd up her snowy breast,
And aye the tear blinded her ee;
Now take, now take mine harmless life,
All guiltless but for loving thee!"

Then he took out a deadly blade,
And drew it from its bloody sheath,
Then laid his hand upon her eyne,
To blind them from the stroke of death.

Then, straight to pierce her broken heart,
He raised his ruthless hand on high;
But Marjory utter'd shriek so loud,
It made the monster start and fly.

"Now, maiden," said the mighty Shade,
"Thou see'st what dangers waited thee;
Thou see'st what snares for thee were laid,
All underneath the greenwood tree.

"Yet straight on ruin wouldst thou run!
What think'st thou of thy lover meek,—
The comeliest and the kindest youth
That ever kiss'd a maiden's cheek?"

Then sore, sore did poor Marjory weep,
And cried, " This world 's a world of woe,
A place of sin, of snare, and gin ;
Alas ! what shall poor woman do ?"

" Let woman trust in Heaven high,
And be all ventures rash abjured ;
And never trust herself with man,
Till of his virtue well assured.

The Spirit turn'd him round about,
And up the glen he strode amain,
Quhill his white hair along the heaven
Stream'd like the comet's fiery train.

High as the eagle's morning flight,
And swift as is his cloudy way,
He bore that maiden through the night,
Enswathed in wonder and dismay ;

And he flang her in the Dominie's bed,—
Ane good soft bed as bed could be !
And when the Dominie he came home,
Ane richt astounded man was he.

Quod he, " My dear sweet Marjorye,
My best beloved and dawted dame,
You are welcome to my bed and board,
And this brave house to be thine hame:

" But not till we in holy church
Be bound, never to loose again;
And then I will love you as my life,
And long as life and breath remain."

Then the Dominie took her to holy church,
And wed her with a gowden ring;
And he was that day a joyful man,
And happier nor a crowned king.

And more unsmirchit happiness
Ne'er to an earthly pair was given;
And all the days they spent on earth,
They spent in thankfulness to Heaven.

Now, maidens dear, in greenwood shaw,
Ere you make trystes with flattering men,
Think of the sights poor Marjory saw,
And the GREAT SPIRIT OF THE GLEN.

JOCK TAIT'S EXPEDITION TO HELL.

Jock Tait he sat on yon hill side,
And wow but his heart was sair,
For he had wept so long and loud,
That he could weep nae mair.

The scalding tears his cheeks did smart,
Quhill both his eyne ran dry;
The sobs were bobbing at his heart,
And his mouth was sore awry.

He took his bonnet off his head,
And threw it on the green;
And aye he claw'd his burly pow,
And gave ane rair between:

" Oh, woe is me," said the grievous youth,
" That ever I once was born,
For I have lost mine own true love,
And my heart is left forlorn!

" I loved her better nor my bread,
Far better than my life;
I would have given this bullet head
To have had her for my wife!
" She was the sun-blink on the brae,
As sweet and as dear to me;
Far sweeter than the light of day
To the weary wakerife ee.

" She was the rainbow among the clouds;
The lily among the dew;
The bonnie moorhen among the men,
Of all the birds that flew.

" A rose-bud grew within her mouth,
Which man could never espy;
But the breeze out of the vernal south
Was sweet when she was nigh.



" She was the rose among the flowers;
The cherry among the haws;
The star of love among the stars;
The sea-maw 'mang the craws.

" It was her power, it was her part,
The souls of men to thrall,
But, oh! she had ane wicked heart,—
And that was worst of all!

" She gart me ware my penny fee,
And never thought it sin,
On silken cloak of cramasye
To row her beauty in.

" She gart me sell my colly true,
My last lamb on the lea,
To deck her all in the scarlet hue,—
A comely sight to see.

" And now the end of all my gear,—
It grieveth me to tell,—
It hath sent my bonnie lass to the deil;
I would rather have gone mysell!"

With that Jock Tait he heard a laugh,
Somewhere aboon his head,
And he lookit east, and he lookit west,
For his heart was fill'd with dread;

He lookit o'er his left shoulder,
To see what he could see;
There he beheld the muckle deil
Coming stending o'er the lea!

He wore a boustrous shepherd's plaid,
That wauffit as he were wud;
And the blue bonnet on his head
Was like a thunder clud.

His locks were like the heather cowe,
And swarthy was his hue,—
It was of that dark and fearsome tint,
Between the black and blue.

In sooth, he was a gousty ghaist
As any ee could see;
And jolly mischief on his face
Was printed stamphishlye.

The shepherd was astounded sore,
And he courit him down for fear:
" Oh, wha are you, ye boustrous carle,
Or what are you seeking here?"

" I am Gil-Moullis, the shepherd's deil,
And a heavy charge have I;
For they are the most rampaugent race
That breathes aneath the sky.

" They think of women night and day,
And nothing else they mind,
Quhill their very souls do fall a prey
To the love of womankind.

" I will not claim the comely dame
Which you gave o'er to me;
For one light reckless deed of shame,
Mine she will never be.

" But your kind offer in her place,
I take with heart and hand;
For we like to see a shepherd's face
Better nor all the land.

I have women enew, of rosy hue,
All rath and rubiconde;
I cannot stir my foot at home,
Their numbers so abound.

"But a shepherd is their great delight,
There is none they like sae weel,
For he touzles them both day and night,
And gars them laugh and squeel.

"And he sings them queer and funny sangs,
Which make their hearts full glad,
And tells them melting tales of love,
Which almost put them mad."

Then the shepherd claw'd his burly head,
And girn'd, and laugh'd amain;
And he pull'd the moss up from the hill,—
For he could not refrain.

Quo he, "You are ane funny deil,
Be more whate'er you may;
Faith, I would like to see the jades,
And hear what they would say!"

"I trow'd as much," said the muckle deil,
"That gart me come with speed;
For it is a hame will suit you weel,
In all your times of need.

"It was made for you, and you for it,
And many more beside;
There is naething happens in nature braid,
That wisdom can deride."

He row'd the shepherd in his plaid,
And he took him on his back
As I would do ane poor blind whelp,
The littlest of the pack;

And away and away went the muckle deil,
Striding ower hill and dale;
It was such ane awsome sight to see,
That the shepherd's heart did fail:

The mountains were his stepping-stones,
While far ower firth and flood,
His bonnet bobbit yont the sky,
Ane dark and troubled clud.

He walk'd like column stark and stour
On tops of mountains green;
For aye he spangit frae hill to hill,
Though twenty miles between.

And the frighten'd moorfowls fled amain
All shimmering on the wind;
And the ptarmigans they left the height,
And never look'd behind.

And ower the mountain and the main
He held his mighty way,
Quhill they left the daylight far behind,
And enter'd a twilight gray.

And the sun went down into the east,
And the moon into the main;
And the little burning lamps of Heaven,
They vanish'd ane by ane.

At length they came to the deil's ha' yett,
And tirled at the pin,
And ane jolly porter open'd the door,
And smudgit as they came in.

" Maister Gil-Moullis," then said Jock Tait,
" Is this your lusty hame?
I will thank you then to take me back,
To the place from whence I came.

" For here I cannot see a styme,
And dare not gang for fear;
But I hear the yelp of women's tongues,
Which I like weel to hear."

" Oh!" said the deil, " the light is good,
When here a while you dwell;
It is rather sombre at the first,
But suits exceeding well.

" For it is the bagnio of hell,
Ane brave and gallant place,—
The grandest game that ever was framed
For sinners of human race:

" For we have kings, and dukes, and lords,
That daily come in pairs;
But the jolly shepherds and the priests
Are our best customers.

" 'Tis strange we have no ladies here,
Scarce one our halls within;
These are all princesses and queens,
And limmers of vulgar kin.

" But you shall find them loving and kind,
Right blithsome, frank, and free,
And aye the longer you love them,
The madder in love you'll be."

" Could I but see," the Shepherd said,
" To make my choice aright,
This is the very place for me,
In which I would delight."

Then the deil he flung the shepherd down
As he were ane dead sheep,
And he lighted on a feather bed,
Between two queans asleep.

But he could not see what they were like,
So up he sprang with speed;
But he heard them giggling, as he ran
In darkness and in dread.

He spied the Lord of ——— supping
His kail out through the reek;
And the doughty chieftain of M——
Was playing at hide-and-seek.

And he saw the lords and lemans gay
Sitting bebbing at the wine;
And aye they drank their merry toasts,
With ogle and with sign.

And everilk draught they swallow'd down
More greedily nor the first;
For aye the langer that they drank,
The hotter grew their thirst.

Enjoyment there brought no alloy,
Desire still waked anew;
The more that they indulged in sin,
The madder on sin they grew.

For mony a year and mony a day
Our Shepherd did remain;
But nought of pleasure came his way
But what grew bitter pain.

For he was fairly stawit of love—
Of rout and revelrye;
He hated the women from his soul,
Yet could not let them be.

And he thought upon his own first love,
With all his early flame,
Who, though she had fallen in ane snare,
Her heart was never to blame.

And oft he said unto himsell,
With the tear blinding his ee,
"Oh, had I her on the green hill side,
And never an eye to see!

"'Tis sweet to see the lass we like
Come linking ower the lea;
'Tis sweet to see the early bud
First nodding frae the tree;

"'Tis sweet to see the morning beam
Kissing the silver dew;
But forgiveness is the sweetest thing
That ever a kind heart knew.

"Yes, I would kiss her blushing cheek,
And grant forgiveness free;
For if I dinna forgive my love,
Then who can pardon me?

"But here may I in shame and sin
For evermore remain,
For I'll never see the green hill side,
Nor mine own true love again!

"Bay-hay! bay-hay!" quo the Shepherd lad,
As loud as he could rair;
And "Bouff!—bouff!" quo his colly dog,
For it wonder'd what was there.

The shepherd started to his feet
In terror and in teen;
For he lay upon the green hill side,
Nor farther had ever been.

He sought his love that very night,
And at his call she came,
And he told her of his dreadful dream
Of sorrow, sin, and shame.

And her wee error with the laird
Was all forgiven free;
And I was at their wedding yestreen,
And a merry night had we!

A BARD'S ADDRESS

TO HIS YOUNGEST DAUGHTER.

Come to my arms, my dear wee pet!
My gleesome, gentle Harriet!
The sweetest babe art thou to me
That ever sat on parent's knee;
Thy every feature is so cheering,
And every motion so endearing.
Thou hast that eye was mine erewhile,
Thy mother's blithe and grateful smile,
And such a playful, merry mien,
That Care flies off whene'er thou 'rt seen.

And, if aright I read thy mind,
The child of nature thou 'rt design'd;
For, even while yet upon the breast,
Thou mimick'st child, and bird, and beast;

Canst cry like Maggy o'er her book,
And crow like cock, and caw like rook,
Boo like a bull, or blare like ram,
And bark like dog, and bleat like lamb:
And when afield, in sunshine weather,
Thou minglest all these sounds together,—
Then who can say, thou happy creature!
Thou'rt not the very child of nature?

Child of my age and dearest love!
As precious gift from God above,
I take thy pure and gentle frame,
And tiny mind of mounting flame;
And hope that through life's chequer'd glade,—
That weary path that all must tread,—
Some credit from thy name will flow
To the old bard who loved thee so:
At least thou shalt not want thy meed,—
His blessing on thy beauteous head,
And prayers to Him whose sacred breath
Lighten'd the shades of life and death—
Who said with sweet benignity,
"Let little children come to me."

And now, sweet child, one boon I crave,—
And pout not, for that boon I'll have,—
One kiss I ask for grandam's sake,
Who never saw thy tiny make;
And one for her who left us late,
Laid low, but not forgotten yet;
And thy sweet mother, too, the nearest
To thee and me, the kindest, dearest,—
Thou sacred, blest memorial,
When I kiss thee, I kiss them all!

'Tis very strange, my little dove!
That all I ever loved, or love,
In wondrous visions still I trace,
While gazing on thy guiltless face,
Thy very name brings to my mind
One, whose high birth and soul refined
Withheld her not from naming me,
Even in life's last extremity.
Sweet babe! thou art memorial dear
Of all I honour and revere!

Come, look not sad: though sorrow now
Broods on thy father's thoughtful brow,

And on the reverie he would dwell—
Thy prattle soon will that expel.
—How darest thou frown, thou freakish fay!
And turn thy chubby face away,
And pout, as if thou took'st amiss
Thy partial parent's offer'd kiss?
Full well I know thy deep design;
'Tis to turn back thy face to mine,
With triple burst of joyous glee,
And fifty strains at mimicrye!

Crow on, sweet child! thy wild delight
Is moved by visions heavenly bright:
What wealth from nature may'st thou gain,
With promptings high to heart and brain!
But hope is all—though yet unproved,
Thou art a shepherd's best beloved:
And now above thy brow so fair,
And flowing films of flaxen hair,
I lay my hand once more, and frame
A blessing, in the holy name
Of that supreme Divinity
Who breathed a living soul in thee.

THE MISER'S WARNING.

THERE was a Carle, right worldly wise,
Wha died without remede,
Yet fought his way to Paradise
After that he was dead.
And the first soul that he met there
Was of a maiden, mild and fair,
Wha once had fallen into a snare,
Whilk led to evil deed.

"Oh, Mrs Madam!" cried John Græme,
"I wonder mightilye
How leddy of such evil fame
Gat into this countrye!
If such as you get footing here,
Then auld John Græme hath cause to fear
He hath the wrong sow by the ear,
And sore dismay'd is he.

" Is this a place of blessedness,
Or is it a place of woe,
Or is it a place of middle space,
That lies between the two?
For there 's a mildness in your mien,
And blitheness in your bright blue eyne,
Whilk certes sennil should be seen,
Where wicked dames do go."

" Oho, John Græme! are you but there?
Did you ne'er hear of this,
That everilk place where spirits fare
To them is place of bliss?
That men and women, by God's might,
Were framed with spirits beaming bright,
Stepping from darkness into light,
Though sunk in sin's abyss?

" A thousand years, or thousands ten,
Not reckon'd once can be;
The immortal spirit rises on
To all eternitye:
It rises on, or more or less,
In knowledge and in happiness,
Progressing still to purer bliss,
That end can never see."

John shook his head, and primm'd his mou,
And claw'd his lug amain,
And says, " Fair dame, if this be true,
How comès it men have lain
In darkness to their spirit's frame,
Their Maker's manage and his aim,
Quhill lighten'd by ane sinful dame,
When light can prove no gain?

" Sooth, it is ane pleasant doctrine
For wicked hearts, I trow,
And suits the lordly libertine,
And ladies such as you——"
Then the fair dame, with witching wile,
Upraised her eyne, withouten guile,
Flung back her locks, and smiled a smile,
And says, " How judgest thou?

" Is it for sauntering, sordid sot,
A hypocritic craven,
Say who is wicked, and who is not,
And widdershin with Heaven?
Do you not know in heart full well,
That if there is a burning hell,
You do deserve the place yoursell,
As well as any leeving?

" You judge like men, and judge amiss,
Of simple maiden's crime,
But through temptations fathomless,
You cannot see a styme.
Through dark and hidden snares of sin,
And warnings of the soul within,
The eyne of mortal may not win,
Within the bounds of time.

" But would you know what brought me here,
To this calm world of thought,
It was the sad and silent tear,
That sweet repentance brought;
Of all the things on earth that be,
Whilk God and angels love to see,
It is the heart's deep agonye
For souls so dearly bought.

" 'Tis that which brings the heavenly bliss
Down like the morning dew,
On lost sheep of the wilderness,
Its longings to renew,
Till the poor lamb that went astray
In vice's wild and witless way,
Is led, as by an heavenly ray,
The light of life to view.

" And let me tell you, auld John Græme,
Though here you seem to be,
You have through darkness, flood, and flame,
A weary weird to dree,
Unless you do, at God's command,
Repent of all your sins off hand,
Whilk in your hateful native land
Have grievous been to see.

" A greater sinner was not born
In dale of Fair Scotland:
You know you stole Jock Laidlaw's corn,
And broke his heart and hand.
And though men knew you were forsworn,
Yet, when his family fell forlorn,
You treated their complaint with scorn,
And broke them from the land.

" Oh fie, John Græme! you sordid slave!
It sets you weel to crack;
You cheating, lying, scurvy knave,
Your heart is raven black!
Instead of a progressive pace,
In virtue, knowledge, and in grace,
Thou art lagging everilk day and space,
And fearfully gone back.

" And there 's a thraldom biding thee,
Thine heart cannot conceive,
Worried a thousand years to be,
Without the least reprieve.
Time was—time is—but will not be,
For, when I pass from warning thee,
An angel, with thy death's decree,
The yetts of heaven shall leave."

" Alake!" says John, " it grieves me sore,
Short mercy I shall find;
I thought I had been dead before,
But how I cannot mind.
Much to repentance I incline,
And I could pray, and I could whine:
But to give back what now is mine,
To that I shall not bind."

Then John knelt down in humble way,
Upon the sward of Heaven,
And pray'd as loud as man could pray,
That he might be forgiven.
" John!" cried his wife, who lay awake,
" What horrid din is this you make?
Get up, old braying brock, and take
Some breath to end this stevin."

" Whisht, wife!" says John, " for I am dead,
And praying on the sky.
What's this? I know my soul is fled,
Or very soon must fly;
For there is an angel on the way;
How long he takes, I cannot say;
But or to-morrow, or to-day,
Poor old John Græme must die;

" And, wife, we must repent for life,
And all men's goods restore."
" The fiend be there, then!" quod the wife—
" Though they were ten times more.
'Tis good to keep the grip one hath,
Either for life, or yet for death.
Repent and pray while you have breath,
And all your sins give o'er;

" And take your chance, like many a ship,
And many a better man."
John rose, and swore he would restore;
And syne begoud to bann
All wicked wives, of bad intent,
Who would not let their men repent,
Without their froward cursed consent,
That hell might them trepan.

John look'd at all his ewes and kye,—
Oh! they were fair to see!
His gold he counted three times bye;
The tear blinded his ee:
But still he swore he would restore,
And blamed the wife, and wept full sore,
Counting his treasure o'er and o'er,
And graining grievouslye.

They yermit and flaitte a summer's day,
Of what was to be done,
And just as spread the gloaming gray,
Behind the setting sun,
The angel with the warrant came;
John felt his vitals in a flame,
Ghastly he stared upon his dame,
But language he had none.

He gave a shiver, and but one,
And still his gold he eyed;
He pointed to it—gave a groan—
And as he lived he died.
The slave of that o'erpowering vice,
That dead'ning, craving AVARICE,
That turns the human heart to ice,
Unblest, unsatisfied.

This carle was hated while he lived,
  Unwept, when he was gone,
But where he went, or how received,
  To me was not made known.
But on this truth I can recline,
That he 's where mercy's rays combine, —
In better hands nor his or mine,
  Which men will not disown.

ST MARY OF THE LOWS.

O LONE St Mary of the waves,
In ruin lies thine ancient aisle,
While o'er thy green and lowly graves,
The moorcocks bay, and plovers wail;
But mountain spirits on the gale
Oft o'er thee sound the requiem dread,
And warrior shades, and spectres pale,
Still linger by the quiet dead.

Yes, many a chief of ancient days
Sleeps in thy cold and hallow'd soil,
Hearts that would thread the forest maze,
Alike for spousal or for spoil,
That wist not, ween'd not, to recoil
Before the might of mortal foe,
But thirsted for the Border broil,
The shout, the clang, the overthrow!

Here lie those who, o'er flood and field,
Were hunted as the osprey's brood,
Who braved the power of man, and seal'd
Their testimonies with their blood;
But long as waves that wilder'd flood,
Their sacred memory shall be dear,
And all the virtuous and the good
O'er their low graves shall drop the tear.

Here sleeps the last of all the race
Of these old heroes of the hill,
Stern as the storm in heart and face;
Gainsaid in faith or principle,
Then would the fire of heaven fill
The orbit of his faded eye;
Yet all within was kindness still,
Benevolence and simplicity.

Grieve, thou shalt hold a sacred cell
In hearts with sin and sorrow toss'd;
While thousands, with their funeral knell,
Roll down the tide of darkness, lost;
For thou wert Truth's and Honour's boast,
Firm champion of Religion's sway!
Who knew thee best, revered thee most,
Thou emblem of a former day!

Here lie old Border bowmen good;
Ranger and stalker sleep together,
Who for the red-deer's stately brood
Watch'd, in despite of want and weather,
Beneath the hoary hills of heather:
Even Scotts, and Kerrs, and Pringles, blended
In peaceful slumbers, rest together,
Whose fathers there to death contended.

Here lie the peaceful, simple race,
The first old tenants of the wild,
Who stored the mountains of the chase
With flocks and herds — whose manners mild
Changed the baronial castles, piled
In every glen, into the cot,
And the rude mountaineer beguiled,
Indignant, to his peaceful lot.

Here rural beauty low reposes,
The blushing cheek, and beaming eye,
The dimpling smile, the lip of roses,
Attractors of the burning sigh,
And love's delicious pangs, that lie
Enswathed in pleasure's mellow mine:
Maid, lover, parent, low and high,
Are mingled in thy lonely shrine.

And here lies one—here I must turn
From all the noble and sublime,
And, o'er thy new but sacred urn,
Shed the heath-flower and mountain-thyme,
And floods of sorrow, while I chime
Above thy dust one requiem.
Love was thine error, not thy crime,
Thou mildest, sweetest, mortal gem!

For ever hallow'd be thy bed,
Beneath the dark and hoary steep;
Thy breast may flowerets overspread,
And angels of the morning weep
In sighs of heaven above thy sleep,
And tear-drops of embalming dew;
Thy vesper hymn be from the deep,
Thy matin from the ether blue!

I dare not of that holy shade,
That's pass'd away, one thought allow,
Not even a dream that might degrade
The mercy before which I bow:
Eternal God, what is it now?
Thus asks my heart: but the reply
I aim not, wish not, to foreknow;
'Tis veil'd within eternity.

But oh, this earthly flesh and heart
  Still cling to the dear form beneath,
As when I saw its soul depart,
  As when I saw it calm in death:
  The dead rose and funereal wreath
Above the breast of virgin snow,
  Far lovelier than in life and breath—
I saw it then, and see it now.

That her fair form shall e'er decay
  One thought I may not entertain;
As she was on her dying day,
  To me she ever will remain:
  When Time's last shiver o'er his reign
Shall close this scene of sin and sorrow,
  How calm, how lovely, how serene,
That form shall rise upon the morrow!

Frail man! of all the arrows wounding
  Thy mortal heart, there is but one
Whose poison'd dart is so astounding,
  That bear it, cure it, there can none.
  It is the thought of beauty won,
To love in most supreme degree,
  And, by the hapless flame undone,
Cut off from nature and from thee

THE ORIGIN OF THE FAIRIES.

I HAVE heard a wondrous old relation,
How the Fairies first came to our nation;
A tale of glamour, and yet of glee,
Of fervour, of love, and of mysterye.
I do not vouch for its certain truth,
But I know I believed it in my youth;
And envied much the enchanted Knight,
Who enjoy'd such beauty and pure delight.
I will tell it now, and interlard it
With thoughts with which I still regard it,
And feelings with which first I heard it.

The Knight of Dumblane is a hunting gone,
With his hey! and his ho! and hallo!
And he met a merry maid alone,
In the light green and the yellow.

That maiden's eyes were the pearls of dew,
And her cheek the moss-rose opening new;
Her smile was the sun blink on the brae,
When the shower is past, and the cloud away.
And then her form was so light and fair,
That it seem'd to lean on the ambient air;
So very blithsome and so boon,
That the Knight was afraid it would fade too soon;
Mount on the ether from human ken,
Or melt away in the breeze of the glen.

His frame thrill'd to the very core
When he saw that beauty stand him before,
With the gleam of joy on her brow so meek,
And the dimple on her damask cheek.
And then so ripe was her honey lip,
That the wild bee, lingering, long'd to sip;
And the merle came by with an eye of guile,
For he hover'd and lighted down a while
On the snowy veil in which she was dress'd,
To pick the strawberries from her breast.
O was there aught below the heaven
I would not have done, or would not have given,

To have been the Knight of Dumblane that day!—
But 'twas better for me that I was away.

The Knight came nigh, and essay'd to speak,
But the glamour of love was on his cheek;
And a single word he could not say,
For his tongue in thirsty silence lay.
But he doff'd his cap from his manly brow,
And he bow'd as low as a knight could bow,
Then stood with his velvet cap in hand,
As waiting for the maiden's command.

Sure this was witless as could have been,
I cannot conceive what the Knight could mean;
For, had I been there, in right or wrong,
As sure as I sing you this song,
I would, as the most due respect,
Have twined my arms around her neck,
And, sure as man e'er woo'd a maid,
Have row'd her in my shepherd plaid,
And, in token of my high regard,
Have set her down on the flowery sward;
And if some discourse had not begun,
Either in quarrel or in fun,

Take never a shepherd's word again,
And count my skill in wooing vain;
All this I would have done with speed—
But for ever would have rued the deed!

Oh, never was knight so far o'ercome
As he who now stood blushing and dumb
Before this maid of the moorland brake,
With the cherub eye and the angel make.
At first no higher his glance was thrown
Than the flowery heath that her foot stood on;
When by degrees it embraced her toe,
But over the ankle durst not go;
Till at length he stammer'd out modestlye,
"Pray—madam—have you—any commands for me?"

Shame fa' the Knight! I do declare
I have no patience with him to bear;
For I would have look'd, as a man should do,
From the shoe tie to the glancing brow;
Nay, from the toe's bewitching station,
Even to the organ of veneration.
For what avails the loveliest face,
Or form of the most bewitching grace,

Which on earth are made for man alone,
If they are not to be look'd upon?
Yes, I would have look'd till my sight had rack'd,
And the very organs of vision crack'd,
And I would have sworn, as a man should swear,
That I never saw virgin half so fair:
This I had done, despite all pain,
But, ah! I never had done it again!

But the maid was delighted beyond expression
To mark the young Knight's prepossession,
And with a smile that might have given
Some pangs even to a thing of heaven,
She took so moving a position
That set his soul in full ignition:
One limb alone scarce press'd the ground,
The other twined her ankle round;
Her lovely face was upward cast;
Her sunny locks waved in the blast;
And really she appear'd to be
A being divine—about to flee
Away from this world of self and sin,
A lovelier, holier clime to win.

No posture with that can ever compare—
What a mercy that I was not there!

But he raised his eyes as hers withdrew,
And of her form got one full view:
The taper limb, and the slender waist,
The modest mould of her virgin breast,
The lips just opening with a smile,
And the eye upraised to heaven the while;
The purple tides were seen to entwine
In a thousand veins all crystalline!
Enough! The sequence is too true:
For though the Knight got but one view,
One full intoxicating look,
It was more than his fond heart could brook;
For on the ground he fell, as dead
As he had been shot out through the head.

Now this was rather a sad o'erthrow;
I don't think I would have fallen so;
For though a lovely virgin face
Has sometimes put me in piteous case,
Has made me shed salt tears outright,
And sob like the wind on a winter night,

Nay, thrown me into a burning fever,
Yet I never just went off altogether;
But I have reason, without a flam,
Thankful to be—and so I am—
That I was spared the illusive sight
That was seen by that enchanted Knight.

Now it seems that the maiden to fear began
For the life of that young and comely man,
And every art essay'd, to try
To make him uplift his amorous eye;
But in reality, or in mime,
The swoon continued a weary time.
And better had it been if he had never
Re-open'd his eyes, but slept for ever;
For when next they awoke on the light of day,
His cheek on the maiden's bosom lay.
He felt its warmth new life impart,
And the gentle throbs of her beating heart;
He felt, beneath his aching head,
The enchanting mould that had laid him dead;
He felt her hand his temples chafing,
And every tenderness vouchsafing;

He lifted his head—he hid his face—
And stole his cheek from that witching place;
Yet still he cast, though disinclined,
A longing, lingering glance behind,
Where he saw—but I dare not describe the view,
For, if you are a man, it will kill you too;
If you are a woman, and lovely beside,
You will turn up your nose in disdain and pride.
If you are not, without a frown,
You will laugh at the Knight till you fall down;
For true it is, when the Knight had seen
The beauteous bed where his cheek had been,
The blush and the smile, and the lucid vein,
He gave one shriek, with might and main,
Then shiver'd a space, and died again!

From that time forth, if I durst tell,
Unto that Knight such hap befell,
As never was own'd by mortal man,
And never was told since tales began.
He got his wish—it proved a dear one,
It is an old story, and a queer one:

But free of fear, and free of fetter,
I'll tell it out even to the letter—
The wilder 'tis I love it the better.

We all have heard the maxim old,
That a tale of truth should aye be told;
For nothing in nature happen can,
That may not a lesson prove to man:
Now this is true:—Yet things we ken,
Oft happen between the women and men,
So wild, romantic, and precarious,
So complicated, and contrarious;
So full of passion and of pain,
They scarcely can bear to be told again.
Then think of love 'twixt a mortal creature,
And a being of another nature!

The Knight was lost—that very morn,
Rung the last peal of his hunting horn;
His comrades range the mountain reign,
And call his name, but call in vain;
From his hawks and his hounds he is borne away,
And lost for a twelvemonth and a day;

And, all that time, he lived but to prove
The new delights and the joys of love—
His mistress, a pattern of sweetness and duty,
And her home a palace of splendour and beauty.
But whether it was in the sinful clime
That bounds Mortality and Time,
In a land below, or a land above,
In a bower of the moon, or the star of love,
He never could fathom or invent,
Or the way that he came, or the way that he went;
But he ween'd, from his love's ærial nature,
That she barely could be a mortal creature.

And every night in his ears there rung
The accents sweet of the female tongue;
Light sounds of joy through the dome were ringing—
There was laughing, dancing, harping, singing:
But foot of man in the halls was none,
Nor sound of voice but his own alone;
While every night his beloved dame
In new array to his chamber came;
And, save herself, by day or night,
No other form ever met his sight.

So ween'd the Knight; but his mind was shaken,
And, alas! how far he was mistaken!
For love's full overwhelming tide
O'er the mind of man is hard to bide.
Yet this full fraught of delirious joy,
Without reverse and without alloy,
I would once have liked to have essay'd;
But at last—how I had been dismay'd!

The times soon changed; for, by slow decay,
The sounds of joy were melted away
To a tremulous strain of tender wailing
Of sufferings for a former failing;
While something was sung, in a plaintive key,
Of a most mysterious tendencye,
Of beings, who were not of the earth,
To human creatures giving birth;
Of seven pure beings of purity shorn,
Of seven babies that might be born,
The nurslings of another clime,
By creatures of immortal prime,
Of the mother's thrilling fears, and more
Of the dark uncertainty before!

The Knight then dreaded,—as well might he!—
That things were not as things should be;
And a hearty wish rose in his mind,
That he were at the home he left behind.
To wish, and to have, in the charmed ring
Of that sweet dome, was the self same thing;
For the Knight awaken'd, as from a dream,
And he stood by the wild and mossy stream,
Where first he felt the bewitching power
Of the beauteous maid at the morning hour,
Where he fell a victim to beauty's charms,
And died of love in a virgin's arms!

He sought his halls and his stately bower;
But a solemn stillness seem'd to lower
Around his towers and turrets high:
His favourite hound would not come nigh,
But kept aloof, with a murmuring growl,
And a terror his heart could not control;
For he prick'd up his ears, and snuff'd the wind,
Though he heard his master's voice behind,
Then fled with his bristles of dread unfurl'd,
As from a thing of another world.

And every maiden, and every man,
Away from their master in terror ran;
While his aged mother, in weeds of woe,
Conjured him solemnly to go
Back to his grave, and his place of rest!
For her mind with terror was sore oppress'd.
But there he remain'd, and once again
Was hail'd as the true Knight of Dumblane.

But, oh! how changed in every feature,
And all the vehemencies of his nature,
As if an eagle from cliffs above
Had been changed into a plaintive dove;
From a knight of courage and of glee,
He was grown a thing of perplexitye,
Absent and moping, puling, panting,
A vacant gaze, and the heart awanting:
Earth had no pleasures for his eye,
When he thought of the joys that were gone by.
This to some natures may be genial,
Or, as a failing, counted venial;
For me, I judge the prudent way,
Let past time have been what it may,

Is to make the most, with thankful mind,
Of that which still remains behind.

The Knight lived on as scarce aware,
How long I neither know nor care,
Till at the last, one lovely morn,
The fairest lady that ever was born
Came into his bower, with courtesy bland;
And a lovely boy was in either hand,—
Two tiny elves, alike not less
Than twin flowers of the wilderness.

"Thou art my lord, my own true knight,
Whose love was once my sole delight.
Oh, I recall,—how can I not?—
That morning, never to be forgot,
When I met thee first, with horn and hound,
Upon the moor, to the hunting bound,
When thy steed like lightning fled away,
And thy staghound howl'd and would not stay;
Thou stolest the heart that never had birth,
The heart of a being not of this earth:
And what is more, that heart to wring,
The virtue of an immortal thing.

Dost thou own these babes in the gold and green,
The loveliest twins that the world has seen;
Wilt thou here acknowledge us as thine own,
Or bear the brunt of our malison?"

Then the Knight shed tears of joy apace
At seeing again that lovely face;
And his heart with love was sore oppress'd
As he folded the fair dame to his breast:
"Thou art my lady love," said he,
"And I never loved another but thee!"

"Alas, how blind are earthly eyes
To those that are lighted by other skies,
By other breezes, untainted by sin,
And by other spirits that dwell within!
Well might thy raptures of pleasures be
Sublimed by creatures such as we:"
The lady said, with an eye of shame,
When enter'd another most comely dame,
As like to the first as she could be,
As like as cherries on the same tree;
While hanging on either hand were seen
Two lovely babies in gold and green.

" Thou art my own true lord and love,"
The second said, " and thou wilt approve
This dear love-token, I changed with thee,
When sitting in the bower upon thy knee."
The Knight acknowledged the token rare,
And flew to embrace his lady fair;
But remembrance came with a thrilling pain,
That, instead of one lady, he now had twain,
And instead of two babies of beauty and grace,
There were four all looking him in the face.
He stood like a statue, of sense bereft,—
He look'd to the right and then to the left,
But one from the other he could not know,
They were both the same, and yet there were two.
While thus he stood prepared for shrift,
In came a third—a fourth—a fifth—
A sixth—a seventh! All round they stand,
And each had a baby in either hand,—
And each had her love-tokens to display,
Which the Knight acknowledged without delay.
But how that maid he met on the hill,
And loved so dearly, and loved her still,
Had thus the powers of nature outdone,
And multiplied into twenty and one—

Why, that was more than he could believe,
Than his head could frame, or his heart conceive;
And still he cast his eye to the door,
Distrustful that there were not more.

His lady mother at length attended,
And her courtesies were with wonder blended,
To see such beauty in such array,
Seven dames all lovely as morns of May,
With fourteen babies in a ring,
And all like the children of a king;
And she laid on her son her quick behests,
To tell her the quality of their guests.

" Why, mother, 'tis strange as strange can be,
And yet it is truth I tell to thee,
That all these dames of beauty so bright,
Claim me for their own true lord and knight;
Nay, and I may not deny it neither,
And all these children call me father!
But I swear by my vows of morn and even,
And I swear before the throne of Heaven,
That I never knew of daughter nor son,
Nor of a love, save only one;

There is glamour abroad in moor and glen,
And enchantment in all the walks of men."

" Why, son, it has often been told to me,
That you never could learn to multiplye!
Your bold advancement now I greet;
It is practice that makes the man complete!"
This said, the dame, with a sullen smile,
And a gloom upon her brow the while;
For she soon perceived, by dint of lore,
That the Seven Weird Sisters stood her before,
Who had dwelt in enchanted bower sublime,
From the ages of an early time;
Condemn'd for an unhallow'd love
Endless virginity to prove,
And endless longings for bliss to be,
In their palace of painful luxurye,
Unless a mortal knight should fall
In their love-snares, and wed them all.
And for all this numerous comely birth,
She knew that her son was lost to earth,
And perchance would be caught in enchantment's
thrall,
And lost to heaven—the worst of all.

"My son," she said, "since so it be,
That all this comely progenye
Are here acknowledged to be thine,—
Before they can be received as mine,
I have lock'd the doors, the gates, and all,
And here, within this stately hall,
They shall kneel before a sacred sign,
And be christen'd by a name divine."

Then a shriek arose from the lovely train,—
Was never heard such a yell of pain,—
Till the gorgeous ceiling that glow'd o'erhead
Was shiver'd like an autumn reed,
And the images all prostrate lay,
And the casements of the tower gave way,
And the lovely train, all three by three,
Walk'd forth in beauty and in glee;
While many a glance they cast behind,
As they trode the billows of the wind;
For they danced as lightly through the air
As if heaved on the gilded gossamer,
That play'd, with a soft and silent motion,
Like the gentlest swell that woos the ocean;

And many an eye beheld them fly,
And heard this plaintive melody:

"Now we are free,
Now we are free,
We Seven Sisters now are free,
To fly where we long have wish'd to be;
And here we leave these babies of ours,
To dwell within our shady bowers,
And play their pranks in the moonlight dell,
With the human beings they love so well;
For oh, they are babies of marvellous birth,
They are neither of heaven nor yet of earth;
And whether they will live till time be done,
Or fade away in a beam of the sun,
Or mount on the polar heights sublime,
And to worlds of unknown splendour climb,
Is a mystery which no eye can pierce,
But His, the Lord of the universe:
But this we know,
That above or below,
By the doors of death they shall never go.

"Adieu, our sweet little babies, for ever!
Blith be your lives, and sinful never;
You may play your pranks on the wicked and wild,
But wrong not Virtue's sacred child,—
So shall your frolics be lightsome and boon,
On the bridge of the rainbow or beam of the moon;
And so shall your loves in the bridal bowers
Be sweeter still than your father's and ours;
And the breezes shall rock you to soft repose,
In the lap of the lily or breast of the rose;
And your beauty every eve renew,
As you bathe your forms in the fragrant dew,
That stands a heavenly crystal bell
In the little dew-cup's lovely well;
Your drink be the haze on the moonlight rill,
And your food the odour which flowers distil,
And never let robes your forms adorn
That are not from the web of the rainbow shorn,
Or the purple and green that shines afar
In the breast of the eastern harvest star;
And then shall you ride
O'er land and o'er tide,
O'er cloud, and o'er foam of the firmament wide,

O'er tree and o'er torrent, o'er flood and o'er flame,
And THE FAIRIES shall be your earthly name:
In joy and in glee
Your revels shall be,
Till a day shall arrive that we darkly foresee;
But note you well when these times commence,
And prepare for your departure hence.

"When the psalms and the prayers are nightly heard
From the mossy cave or the lonely sward;
When the hunters of men rise with the sun,
And pursue their game till the day be done;
And the mountain burns have a purple stain
With the blood of men in the moorland slain;
And the raven croaks in the darksome cloud,
And the eagle yells in the heavens aloud,
We you command,
With heart and hand,
To leave the links of Fair Scotland.
Away! dismiss!
And seek for bliss
In a happier, holier sphere than this!

"Sweet babies, adieu!
And may you never rue
The mingled existence we leave to you!
There is part of virtue and part of blame,
Part of spirit and part of flame,
Part of body and passion fell,
Part of heaven and part of hell.
You are babies of beauty and babies of wonder;
But fly from the cloud of the lightning and thunder,
And keep by the moonbeam or twilight gray,
For you never weer made for the light of day.
Long may you amid your offspring dwell,—
Babies of beauty, kiss and farewell!"

The Knight of Dumblane, from that day forth,
Never utter'd word upon the earth;
But moved about like a spirit in pain
For certain days, then vanish'd again,
And was chosen, as my old legend says,
The patriarch King of the Scottish Fays.
With full command o'er these beings strange;
But his human nature never would change,

Till, at the end of a thousand moons,
All deck'd with garlands and gay festoons,
He was borne away, with lament and yell,
And paid as kane to the Prince of Hell!

From such unhallow'd love as this,
With all its splendour and all its bliss,
Its end of terror and its bane,
May Heaven preserve us all! — Amen.

ALLAN OF DALE.

At the dawning of morn, on a sweet summer day,
Young Mary of Moy went out to pray,—
To pray, as her guileless heart befitted,
For the pardon of sins that were never committed;
A grateful homage to render Heaven
For all its gifts and favours given,—
For a heart that dreaded the paths of sin;
For a soul of life and light within;
And a form, withal, so passing fair
That the rays of love seem'd centring there.

Mary felt that her eye was beaming bright,
For her bosom glow'd with a pure delight:
As over the greenwood sward she bounded,
A halo of sweets her form surrounded;

For the breezes that kiss'd her cheek grew rare,
Her breathing perfumed the morning air;
And scarce did her foot, as she onward flew,
From the fringe of the daisy wring out the dew.

She went to her bower, by the water-side,
Which the woodbine and wild-rose canopied:
And she knelt beneath its fragrant bough,
And waved her locks back from her brow;
But just as she lifted her eye so meek,
A hand from behind her touch'd her cheek:
She turn'd her around, with a visage pale,
And there stood Allan of Borlan-dale!

ALLAN.

Sweet Mary of Moy, is it so with thee?
Have I caught thee on thy bended knee,
Beginning thy rath orisons here,
In the bower to the breathings of love so dear?
Oh tell me, Mary, what this can mean!
Hast thou such a great transgressor been?
Is the loveliest model of mortal kind
A thing of an erring, tainted mind,

That thus she must kneel and heave the sigh,
With the tear-drop dimming her azure eye?
To whom wert thou going thy vows to pay?
Or for what, or for whom, wert thou going to pray?

MARY.

I was going to pray in the name divine
Of Him that died for me and for mine;
I was going to pray for them and me,
And haply, Allan, for thine and thee.
And now I have answer'd as well as I may
Your questions thus put in so strange a way:
But I deem it behaviour most unmeet,
Thus to follow a maid to her lone retreat,
To hear her her heart of its sins unload,
And all the secrets 'twixt her and her God.
For shame, that my kindred should hear such a tale
Of the gallant young Allan of Borlan-dale!

ALLAN.

Sweet Mary of Moy, I must be plain:
I have told you once, and tell you again,
Though in love I am deeper than woman can be,
You must either part with your faith or me.

MARY.

What! part with my faith? You may as well demand,
That I should part with my own right hand!
Than part with that faith I would sooner incline
To part with my heart from its mortal shrine.

ALLAN.

Ah! Mary! dear Mary! how can you thus frown,
And propose to part with what 's not your own?
For that heart now is mine: and you must, my sweet dove,
Renounce that same faith on the altar of Love.

Then Mary's sweet voice took its sharpest key,
And rose somewhat higher than maiden's should be;
But ere the vehement sentence was said,
A gentle hand on her lips was laid,
And a voice, to her that was ever dear,
Thus whisper'd softly in her ear: —

LADY OF MOY.

Hush, Mary! dear Mary! what madness is this?
These dreams of the morning, my darling, dismiss:

Awake from this torpor of slumber so deep;
You are raving and clamouring through your sleep:
Up, up, and array you in scarlet and blue:
For Allan of Dale is come here to woo.

MARY.

Tell Allan of Dale straight home to hie,
And court Helen Kay, or his darling of Skye:
This positive message deliver from me,
For I list not his heretic face to see.

LADY.

My Mary! dear Mary! what am I to deem?
Arouse you, my love; you are still in your dream:
Your lover's views of things divine
May differ in some degree from thine;
But I think he is one who will not pother
Betwixt the one faith and the other.

MARY.

That is worse and worse; for my lover must be
Attach'd to my faith as well as to me:
We must kneel at one beloved shrine,
And the mode of his worship must be mine.

For why should a wedded pair devout,
By different paths seek heaven out?
Or in that dwelling happy be,
Who of the road could never agree?
O mother! this day, without all fail,
I had given my hand to young Borlan-dale;
But I've had such a hint from the throne on high,
Or some good angel hovering nigh,
That tongue of mortal should never prevail
On me to be bride to this Allan of Dale,
Unless he sign over a bond, for me
In the path of religion his guide to be.

Young Allan to all his companions was known
As a sceptic of bold and most dissolute tone,
Who jeer'd at the cross, at the altar, and priest,
And made our most holy communions his jest;
Yet Mary of this had of knowledge no gleam,
Till warn'd of her danger that morn in her dream.
He loved his Mary for lands and for gold,
For beauty of feature, and beauty of mould,
As well as a cold-hearted sceptic could love
Who held no belief in the blessings above;

And whene'er of his faith or his soul she spoke,
He answer'd her always with jeer and with joke.

The frowns of the maiden, and sighs of the lover,
With poutings and nay-says, were all gotten over;
And nothing remain'd but the schedule-deed gerent,
The bonds and the forms of the final agreement,—
A thing called a contract, that long-galling fetter!
Which parents love dearly, and lawyers love better.
In this was set down, at the maiden's indictment,
One part, to devotion a powerful incitement,
That her lover should forfeit, without diminution,
Her fortune redoubled, (a sore retribution!)
If ever his words or his actions should jostle
With the creed she revered of the holy apostle.
The terms were severe, but resource there was none;
So he sign'd, seal'd, and swore, and the bridal went on.
Well was it for Mary! for scarce were got over
The honeymoon joys, ere her profligate lover
Began his old gibes, when in frolicsome mood,
At all that the Christian holds sacred and good:
But still, lest the terms might be proven in law,
The bond and the forfeiture kept him in awe;

Which caused him to ponder, and often think of it,—
This thing that he jeer'd at, and where lay the profit?
Till at last, though by men it will scarce be believed,
A year had not pass'd, ere he daily perceived
The truths of the Gospel rise bright and more bright,
Like the dawning of day o'er the darkness of night,
Or the sun of eternity rising to save
From the thraldom of death, and the gloom of the grave.

Then Mary's fond heart was with gratitude moved,
To her God, for the peace of the man that she loved;
And her mild face would glow with the radiance of beauty,
As he urged her along on her Christian duty;
For of the two, his soul throughout
Grew the most sincere and the most devout.

Then their life pass'd on like an autumn day,
That rises with red portentous ray,
Threatening its pathway to deform
With the wasting flood and the rolling storm;
But, long ere the arch of the day is won,
A halo of promise is round the sun,

And the settled sky, though all serene,
Is ray'd with the dark and the bright between;
With the ruddy glow and the streamer wan,
Like the evil and good in the life of man;
And, at last, when it sinks on the cradle of day,
More holy and mild is its sapphire ray.
Oh! why should blind mortals e'er turn into mirth
The strange intercourse betwixt heaven and earth,
Or deem that their Maker cannot impart,
By a thousand ways, to the human heart,
In shadows portentous of what is to be,
His warnings, His will, and His final decree?

This tale is a fact—I pledge for 't in token,
The troth of a poet, which may not be broken;
And, had it not been for this dream of the morn,
This vision of prayer, intrusion, and scorn,
Which Heaven at the last hour thus deign'd to deliver,
The peace of the twain had been ruin'd for ever.

WILL AND SANDY.

A SCOTS PASTORAL.

It happen'd once upon a day,
In the most pleasant month of May,
Upon a year foretold langsyne,
The eighteen hundred twenty-nine,
Of which enlighten'd martyrs said
'Twould see the dire foundation laid,
In kingdom or in isle adjacent,
Of Scotland's ruin and debasement.
Alack! for my old native land,
Of the bold heart and ready hand,
Of the wild mountain, moor, and bracken,
I hope these prophets were mistaken.

Man cannot tell, chance as it may;
A simple tale I only say,
Of two young blithesome shepherd blades,
With their good collies and gray plaids,
Who chanced to meet, near fall of night,
Upon Mount-Benger's lofty height.
The sun lay swathed in vapours pale,
Beyond the moors of Megget-dale,
And the mild gloaming's lovely hue,
Her shades of purple and of blue,
And radiance of her cherub breast,
From golden window of the west,
Told to the shepherd's practised eye
That they were harbingers of joy—
Angels of love, sent forth to borrow
For him a goodly day to-morrow.

It was a scene that even the hind
Could not survey with careless mind,
Although accustom'd well to see
Nature in mountain majesty;
For every ray the welkin threw
Slept on St Mary's mirror blue,

In blushing glories, out of number,
Like beauty in a mimic slumber.

The Yarrow, like a baldrick bright,
Upon the vale, lay bathed in light;
And all her burns and branching rills,
Like silver serpents of the hills;
While far around the eastern heaven,
The dark blue mantle of the even
Was softly heaving up the sky,
So silent and so solemnly,
As if day's fading beauties bland
Were shaded by an angel's hand.

One portion more of mortal prime,
A splendid shred of living time,
Down in the shades of Death was fading,
And o'er its bier the pall was spreading.

SANDY.

Ah! Will, here we can look abroad,
On all the goodness of our God.
We see the heavens benignant smile
On this beloved and favour'd isle;

Our Maker prompt the land to bless,
And our hearts glow with thankfulness:
But what avail these blessings sent,
If by our rulers all misspent?
It grieves me more than I can tell,
To see the King we loved so well,
And Hero firm, whose course sublime
Has been the marvel of our time,
Betray the trust in them reposed,
Abandon faith, and, undisclosed,
To have their perjured measures driven
On, in the teeth of earth and heaven.
Confound them all! for I assever
They're all mansworn, and d——d for ever.

WILL.

Take time, take time, dear neighbour Sandy,
Ere with rebellion's birn I brand thee.
There's such a thing, can you not see,
As fierce and fell necessity;
And here, I solemnly protest,
I think that all's done for the best.
If 't will not work as hoped—what then?
The Senate must annul't again;

But glad am I, as one approver,
That that most sickening plea is over;
For, aye since I could climb a hill,
We have been bother'd with that Bill.
Ruin awaited the denial—
'Tis fair and just to make the trial.

SANDY.

Poor Will!—Daft Will! think on the time
When o'er these heights and rocks sublime,
Our fathers, for the sacred cause
Of truth, our liberties and laws,
From wrath of Popish tyrant's slaves,
No shelter found but in their graves;
Hunted like bandits to the last,
Their forms lay bleaching in the blast,
Till found by shepherds on the waste,
With Bibles in each bloody breast;
And these were all were left to tell
Their names, or in what cause they fell.
Who thinks of that must think with pain
Of setting up that race again—
Who, like the devil, let them get
But one small finger in the state,

And soon they'll wrench a hole therein,
Will let both Pope and Popery in;
And the Reform'd religion must,
Once more degraded, bite the dust.

WILL.

The Lord forbid! as I should pray it,
I dare not think it, far less say it:
But wiser men than you or me
In this expediency agree.—
As counterbalance to your clamours,
I take the Reverend Doctor Chalmers,
Whose heavenly and whose bold appeal
On my conviction placed the seal;
Thomson and Inglis, men of note—
Frank Jeffrey and Sir Walter Scott—
The world more to their judgment looks
Than kings or queens, or lords or dukes:
When ruling heads like these combine,
What's to be thought of yours or mine?

SANDY.

Of Chalmers I shall say but little;
He meddled with a point right kittle,

And said what ill became that day
A Protestant divine to say.
The best of men deceived may be—
They have been so, and so was he;
But he'll yet live to change his boast,
And see his error to his cost:
I grieve for Thomson's dereliction;
But he's so given to contradiction,
That, feud and ferment to prolong,
He'll take a side he knows is wrong:
Jeffrey's religious belief
Is something like himself,—a brief:
And though Sir Walter may be steady,
He's more than half a Pope already,
Which I can prove a strict reality,
From something said in Old Mortality:
But though an angel stood on high,
Even in yon bright and beauteous sky,
And swore with right hand to the heaven,
That Popery's rights should back be given,—
I would distrust the dire award,
And dread a demon's voice I heard.——

" See yon—and hold your peace for ever!"
Cried startled Will, with quake and quiver,
And pointed to a dreadful guest
That rear'd his pale form in the west.
Standing upon a frieze of gold,
He fill'd the west with human mould;
His eye scowl'd with the gleam of death,
As if in sorrow and in wrath;
His right hand like a polar ray,
Was heaved above the milky way;
The evening star kithed like a gem,
In buckler of his diadem:
And altogether such a lightness,
Such angel features, and such brightness,
Never appear'd on Scottish sky,
To startled shepherd's fearful eye.

Will saw in it the guardian sprite
Of Erin, smiling with delight;
But Sandy knew the visitant,
For Angel of the Covenant,
Rising in wrath with lifted hand,
Indignant o'er a guilty land:

To swear in language motion'd stronger,
The church's time should be no longer.

With beating hearts and bristling hair,
Our shepherds left their mountain lair;
For the last moorcock of the fell,
Had mounted from the heather bell,
With rigid wing and crow elate,
And silent sank beside his mate.
Hush'd was the pipe of gray curlew,
And lonely plover's plaintive whew.
The bleating kid had sought its dam,
The ewe cower'd down beside the lamb;
And bogles of the darksome cleugh,
Put on their robes of deadly hue
The harden'd sinner to belay,
And turn his steps another way;
An eirier scene man never saw,
From the dark cone of Benger-Law.
The eastern emerald glimmer'd high,
The polar bear had oped his eye,
While, worst and dreadfullest by far,
The giant of the western star

Frown'd in his majesty sublime,
O'er shadows of the western clime;
Sooth it was time, one's spirit feels,
For our two herds to take their heels!

Mount Benger, *May* 4, 1829.

THE LAST STORK.

"Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

JEREMIAH, viii. 7.

I've heard a tale of olden time,
Of stately Stork of southern clime,
That sail'd the billowy ocean rare,
That waves above the ambient air—
That rolling sea which heaves reclined
Above the regions of the wind,
From which descendeth down amain
The drizzly day, the rattling rain,
The motley mists on mountain blue,
And showers of silver-sifted dew.

O'er this grand ocean of the sky,
Our noble Stork had sail'd on high,
With some few hundred thousands more,
From Nile's debased and muddy shore,

And Jordan's stream, held sacred still,
That from the springs of Hermon hill
Descends by Mirom's reedy brake,
And lone Tiberias' sultry lake,
To glut the Dead Sea's pregnant weed—
A gorgeous range for storks indeed!
And where they still a welcome prove,
As blessings sent from Heaven above.

There had the guests their gathering made,
To shape the dauntless escalade
Of heaven's own arch, and there the host
Gather'd from all Arabia's coast;
From Ethiopia's lakes of gloom,
And jungles of the fierce Simoom:
At last, that none might lag behind,
The word was pass'd as day declined,
To mount upon the moaning wind.

As ever you saw the fire-flaughts sweep
From furnace at the midnight deep,
Pouring with fierce and heavenward aim,
Like rapid shreds of living flame,

Till, fading in the dark alcove,
They vanish in the fields above;
So rose from Jordan's sullen tide,
And dark Tiberias' sultry side,
To navigate the cloudy spheres,
Thousands of milk-white mariners,
All flickering with their dappled wings,
A spiral stream of living things,
Till, far within the ether blue,
They melt in regions of the dew.

Then nought is seen from earth below,
Nor heard, but sounds of distant woe,
A howling, shrieking strain on high,
Alongst the stories of the sky;
As if a host of spirits bright
From this dire world had ta'en their flight,
Weeping with dread uncertainty,
Where there abode was thence to be,
All heighten'd by the thrilling pain,
That they might ne'er return again.

It brings to mind that evening drear,
The last of Judah's hope or fear,

When Heathens raised the demon yell
Of triumph, and Jerusalem fell;
When the devouring brand of Rome
Uplighted Zion's sacred dome,
And told unto the remnant small
Of God's own people, that their thrall
Was then begun that end should never,
Forsaken by their God for ever.
Their temple in one smouldering flame,
What more on earth remain'd for them!
Then rush'd the young and old on death,
Sinking beneath the foemen's wrath,
Till even Havock's bloodshot eye
Turn'd from the carnage scared and dry;
And Avarice spared the wailing few,
Which Pity had refused to do.
What thousands of excluded souls
Would leave that night their earthly goals,
Mounting the air like flickering flame,
With rapid but unguided aim,
Guided, though all to them unknown,
The path unto the judgment throne!
Think of the air crowded to be
With beings of Eternity,

All fearing, hoping, trembling, crying,
Romans and Jews together flying:
How would they feel their race now run,
Of all that they had lost or won,
Of old heartburnings and of strife,
And all their daring deeds of life!
Alas! would every warrior famed,
Or council where a war is framed,
But think of this as madness past,
And to what all must come at last,
And then remember seriously
That there's a reckoning still to be!

But simile now aside I lay—
For similes lead me still astray—
And to our migrant hordes repair.
High o'er the columns of the air,
Like fleets of angels on they steer,
With check, with challenge, and with cheer.
The light foam that we see besprent
On surface of the firmament,
Yielded before the downy prow
And silken sails of wavy snow,

And a long path of changing hue
Laid open vales of deeper blue,
While shepherd of the Alpine reign,
Of Kryman and the Apennine,
Is startled by the wailing cry
Within the bosom of the sky,
That dies upon the northern wind,
And gathers, gathers still behind:
In vain he strains his aching sight,
It strays bewilder'd, lost in light,
While, all alongst the empyrean cone,
Thousands of voices, sounding on,
Strike the poor hind with terror dumb!—
He deems man's sins have reach'd their sum,
And his last day on earth is come.

One resting-place, and one alone,
To mankind ever has been known,
A little lake on Alpine fell,
Where Zurich meets with Appenzell;
And such a scene as their descent
From out the glowing firmament,
While skies around with echoes rung,
No bard hath ever seen or sung:

They come with wild and waving wheel,
Or mazes of the maddening reel,
Pouring like snowballs in a stream,
Or dancing in the solar beam,
With shouts all shouts of joy excelling,
Till even the frigid Alps are yelling.
Such scenes were *once* on Scottish plain,
But there shall ne'er be seen again!

On Scottish plain!—who this may trow?—
What means our bard?—he's raving now;
For, save the fieldfare's countless band,
Or snowflakes of the northern land,
Of migrant myriads there are none;
And trivial such comparison
With this great southern inundation—
I hate so groundless an illation.

Stop, countryman, for I allude
To a more grand similitude.
'Tis known to you, or, if 'tis not,
'Tis pity that it were forgot,
That our own grandsires oft have seen,
As daylight faded on the green,

And moonlight with its hues was blending,
The fairy bridallers descending
Straight from the moon like living stream
On ladder of her golden beam,
All pure as dewdrops of the even,
And countless as the stars of heaven;
Their tiny faces glowing bright
With flashes of a wild delight;
Their little songs of fairy love,
Like music of the spheres above;
And every saraband and ring
As swift as fire-flies on the wing.
That was a scene the soul to glad!—
Deem not my simile so bad.

Well, here within that Alpine lake,
Our blithe aërial sailors take
Their pastime with abundant joy,
Yet lost no moment of employ;
Tribe after tribe apart was set,
To stock each marsh and minaret,
From Zealand's swamps which oceans lave,
To Wolga's wastes and Dwina's wave,

While a small portion, deem'd the best,
Their potent leader thus address'd : —

" Friends, countrymen, and kinsmen mine,
Most noble storks of sacred line,
It grieves me much that we have lost
Our empire upon Britain's coast,
For nought can happen but mischance
Without our blessed countenance;
And since the day that we forsook her,
Such dire mischances have o'ertook her,
By means of blundering, blustering schemers,
Bald turncoats, trimmers, and blasphemers,
That now she stands o'erwhelmed with horror,
And trembles at the gulf before her;
To ruin's brink driven on by foes,
One other push, —and down she goes!
Haste, then, her drooping heart to cherish,
I list not church and state should perish.
One single hint of your descent
May total ruin yet prevent."

" Alas! my liege! whate'er betide,"
A stately noble stork replied,



" There I shall never go for one —
They are all poachers to a man.
Herons, bog-bumpers, and such game,
Are prizes rich enough for them;
For they must shoot at every thing,
Be't duke or teal, or kirk or king;
And not one blessed stork would be
Alive within two days or three.
The very last time I was there,
Had I not mounted in the air
Above the clouds, and cross'd the main,
I ne'er had seen your grace again.
Two goodly relatives of mine,
Brave noble storks of royal line,
As a secure and shelter'd rest,
On Wharn-cliff built their airy nest;
The squire shot both that night they came,
And sold them at the mart for game
At double price of crane or goose,
Swearing they were white heronsheughs.
People that cannot keep unriven
A sacred garb that's to them given,
Deserve no countenance nor grace
From canonized and sacred race.

On Sidmouth cliff or Eldon hill
A bird of heaven might venture still,
Or even on Winshiel's lofty bower,
Or dark Newcastle's smoky tower;
But even there are spoilers nigh—
Leave Britain to her destiny!"

But one bold Stork, and one alone,
Straight to the British shores has flown,
And the first day he settled there,
As roosting on a palace fair,
Rolling his red eye in the ring,
A sporting Bishop broke his wing,
And bore him home, with smiles of joy,
To his beloved cadaverous boy.
That Stork's last speech and dying words
Are all that now my tale affords:—

"Woe to this land, so long beloved,
So long by earth and heaven approved,
But favour'd and preserved in vain
In bulwark of her rolling main!
For all her precious blessings sent
Are wholly by the roots uprent.

That sin can never be forgiven,
Committed 'gainst the light of Heaven,
The spirit's warnings, and the din
Of the small voice that cries within.

" Instead of birds that wing the sky,
Of bold and independent eye,
Nought can her wisdom cherish now
But gull, and grebe, and heronsheugh;
These slabberers, whom God disapproves,
That watch for fishes, and for loaves;
Who, for fat puddock, or such thing,
Would pluck the royal eagle's wing,
And on a view, however sinister,
Would sell the kirk and hang the minister.
Out on them all! I here disburse
To every class my latest curse!
Since they have sacrificed the last
Best blessing to their lot was cast;
Meet they should grovel in the mire,
Till quench'd be all their ancient fire!
The last bird of the heavenly race
Here falls, and leaves his vacant place,

Which base venality surrounds,
A prey to harpies and to hounds.

" Farewell, ye vales of Palestine,
Which I shall ne'er behold again;
Ye piles and altars clothed in dust,
Wherein I placed my early trust,
And which, with death before my sight,
My spirit turns to with delight!

" Farewell, ye clouds, which oft I've rent,
Ye foldings of the firmament,
Where oft I've view'd the treasures dire
Of hail, of thunder, and of fire,
With reeling shades of hideous form,
The first gyrations of the storm.

" Farewell, ye wreathes so downy bright,
Ye windows of empyreal light,
Through which I've view'd the rolling world,
With all her winding dells unfurl'd,
When snowy Alps and streams were seen,
All else appear'd one level green,

While glassy lakes would intervene
As mirrors of the heavenly reign,
In which I saw inverted lie
The marbled clouds that clothed the sky,
And dark blue windows, deeply sleeping,
Through which a thousand storks were peeping.

" Farewell, ye Stars, whose tiny brightness
I've often fann'd with wing of lightness,
Brushing with snowy down the damps
Away from off your gilded lamps,
Then with joint shout of thousand yellings,
Which sounded through your sapphire dwellings,
With boom that made you stop your ears,
And shoot like rockets from your spheres,
Frightening almost to parting breath
The children of this world beneath:
This last farewell with grief I render,—
One bird of heaven foregoes your splendour!

" Farewell, thou Moon, whose silver light
Gilds the dim alcove of the night,
And when thy lord to rest has gone,
With modest mien ascend'st his throne,

Dispensing far, as queen beseems,
The bounty of thy borrow'd beams!
Beloved moon, there is a bound
Of holiness breathes thee around,
A majesty of virgin prime,
A stillness beauteous and sublime,
That, oh! it grieves thy servant's core
That he shall ne'er behold thee more,
Nor pilot to his tribe the way
Through regions of thy modest ray!

" Imperial Sun, so gorgeous bright,
Great source of glory, life, and light,
The stork's own deity alone;
He worships thee—beside thee, none;
For thou endow'st him with the sense
To seek thy milder influence,
Whether in Europe's shadowy woods
Or regions of the tropic floods,—
Farewell for ever, king of heaven!
Be all my trespasses forgiven!
And now on Britain's sordid line
I leave my curse, but crave not thine.

Forgive them all save the state botchers,
Those piteous pedagogues and poachers,
Praters oppress'd with proud proficiency,
Sapience supreme, and self-sufficiency,
Degrading with their yelping bills,
The shepherds on a thousand hills.
O, blessed Sun! to man, in kindness,
Visit them with Assyrian blindness,
That they may grope about for foe,
To tell them whither they should go!
That curse falls on myself—I bow
To thee, to death, and darkness now,
And yield my spirit to the giver.—
Thou beauteous world, adieu for ever!"

Then the fair journeyer of the sky
Crook'd his fair neck, and closed his eye,
Stretch'd out his wing with rigid shiver,
His noble heart gave its last quiver;
And the last guest of heaven is gone
That e'er sought grace in Albion.
Woe to the hands so ill directed,
That should have such a life protected;

But that dire day of sin and shame,
Of bare-faced brazenness and blame,
When Heaven's vicegerents were foresworn,
The child shall rue that is unborn.

MOUNT BENGER, *January* 21, 1830.

SUPERSTITION AND GRACE.

THERE was an auld Carle wonn'd under yon shaw,
His cheek was the clay, and his hair was the snaw;
His brow was as glazed as the winter night,
But mingled with lines of immortal light;
And forth from his livid lips there flew
A flame of a lurid, murky hue.
But there was a mystery him within,
That roused up the twangs and terrors of sin;
And there was a gleide in that auld Carle's ee,
That the saint and the sinner baith trembled to see.

But, oh! when the moor gat her coverlet gray,
When the gloaming had flaughted the night and the day,

When the craws had flown to the greenwood shaw,
And the kid blett over the Lammer Law;
When the dew had laid the valley asteep,
And the gowan had faul't her buds to sleep;
When naething was heard but the merlin's maen,
Oh, then, that gyre Carle was never his lane.
A bonny wee Baby, sae meek and mild,
Then walk'd with him in the dowy wild;
But, oh! nae pen that ever grew
Could describe that Baby's heavenly hue:
Yet all the barmings of sturt and strife,
And weary wailings of mortal life,
Would soon have been hush'd to endless peace
At ae blink of that Baby's face.

Her brow sae fair, and her ee sae meek,
And the pale rose bloom upon her cheek;
Her locks, and the bend of her sweet eebree,
And her smile, might have waken'd the dead to see.
Her snood, befringed wi' many a gem,
Was stown frae the rainbow's brightest hem;
And her rail, mair white than the snawy drift,
Was never woven aneath the lift;

It threw sic a light on the hill and the gair,
That it shew'd the wild deer to her lair;
And the brown bird of the moorland fell
Upraised his head from the heather bell,
For he thought that his dawning of love and mirth,
Instead of the heaven was springing from earth;
And the Fairies waken'd frae their beds of dew,
And they sang a hymn, and that hymn was new.—
Oh, ladies, list! for never again
Shall you hear sic a wild, unearthly strain:
For they sang the night breeze in a swoon,
And they sang the gowd locks frae the moon;
They sang the redbreast frae the wood,
And the laverock out o' the marled cloud,
The capperkayle frae the bosky brae,
And the seraphs down frae the milky way;
And some wee feres of bloodless birth
Came out o' the worm-holes o' the earth,
And swoof'd sae lightly round the lea,
That they wadna kythe to mortal ee;
While the eldrich sang, it rang sae shrill,
That the waesome tod yool'd on the hill:
Oh, ladies, list! for the choral band
Thus hymn'd the song of Fairy Land:—

Song of the Fairies.

Sing, sing! How shall we sing
Round the Babe of the Spirits' King?
How shall we sing our last adieu,
Baby of Life, when we sing to you?
Now the little night-burdie may cheip i' the wa',
The plover may whew, and the cock may craw;
For the bairny's sleep is sweet and sure,
And the maiden's rest is blest and pure,
Through all the links of the Lammer Muir;
Sin our bonny Baby was sent frae heaven,
She comes o'ernight wi' the dew of even;
And when the day-sky bursts frae the main,
She swaws wi' the dew to heaven again;
But the light shall dawn, and the howlet flee,
The dead shall quake, when the day shall be,
That she shall smile in the gladsome noon,
And sleep, and sleep, in the light of the moon.
Then shall our hallelues wake anew
With harp, and viol, and ayril true.
But, well-a-day!
How shall we say
Our earthly adieu ere we pass away?

Ring! Ring!
Dance and sing,
And on the green broom your garlands hing;
Hallow the hopes of this ray of grace,
For sweet is the smile of our Baby's face;
And every ghaist of geysand hue
Has melted away in the air she drew.
The Kelpy may dern, in drear and dool,
Deep in the howe of his eiry pool;
Gil-Moules frae hint the hallan may flee
Through by the threshold and through by the key,
And the mermaid moote in the saffron sea:
But we are left in the greenwood glen,
Because we love the children of men,
Sweetly to sing, and never to rue,
Till now that we hymn our last adieu;
Baby of Life, we sing it to you!

Sing, sing!
How shall we sing
Round the Babe of the Spirits' King?
Hither the breezes of Elfland bring,
Then, Fairies, away—away on the wing!

We now maun flit to a land of bliss,—
To a land of holy silentness;
To a land where the night-wind never blew,
But thy fair spring shall ever be new;
When the moon shall wake, nae mair to wane,
And the cloud and the rainbow baith are gane,
In bowers aboon the break o' the day,
We'll sing to our Baby for ever and aye!

Then the Carle beheld them swoof alang,
And heard the words of their farewell sang:
They seem'd to ling asklent the wind,
And left a pathway of light behind;
But he heard them singing as they flew,—
"Baby of Life, adieu! adieu!
Baby of Grace, we sing to you!"

Then the Carle he kneel'd to that seraph young,
And named her with a tremulous tongue;
And the light of God shone on his face,
As he look'd to heaven, and named her GRACE;
And he barr'd the day of sorrow and pain
Ever to thrall the world again:

Then he clasp'd his hands, and wept full sore,
When he bade her adieu for evermore.

Oh! never was baby's smile so meek
When she felt the teardrop on her cheek;
And never was baby's look so wae
When she saw the stern auld Carle gae;
But a' his eeless and elfin train,
And a' his ghaists and gyes are gane:
The gleids that gleam'd in the darksome shaw
And his Fairies had flown the last of a'.
Then the poor auld Carle was blythe to flee
Away frae the queen isle of the sea,
And never mair seeks the walks of men
Unless in the disk of the gloaming glen.

THE WITCH OF THE GRAY THORN.

" Thou old wrinkled beldam, thou crone of the night,
Come read me my vision, and read it aright;
For 'tis said thou hast insight the picture to scan
Far onward beyond the existence of man,—
And hidest thee for ever from eye of the day,
But ridest on the night-wind, away, and away,
Over cloud, over valley, on hemlock or reed,
To burrow in churchyards, and harass the dead.
Old beldam declare thee, and give me to wis,
If I stand at the side of such being as this!"

" Mad Priest of Inchaffery, I know thee too well,
Though thus in disguise thou hast come to my cell;
What is it to thee, if through darkness I fly
Like bird to career round the skirts of the sky?
Or sail o'er the seas in my shallop of shell,
To do what the tongue of flesh dares not to tell?

Suffice it, I know what thy vision hath been,
Ere a word I have heard, or a sign I have seen;
Besides, its high import distinctly I see,
And, Priest of Inchaffery, I'll tell it to thee—
Not for love or reward, but it troubles me sore
To have one in my presence I scorn and abhor.

"Thou didst dream of a coronet blazing with gold,
That was hail'd by the young, and admired by the old;
And thou hadst a longing the thing to obtain,
But all thy bold efforts to reach it were vain;
When, lo! thine own mitre arose from thy crown,
And mounted aloft, whilst the other sank down;
It mounted and rose in a circle of flame,
'Midst clamours of wonder and shouts of acclaim;
The crown into darkness descended apace,
And thine was exalted on high in its place.
Thou sawst till the red blood ran down in a stream,
Thou awakedst in terror—and all was a dream!
Priest, that was thy dream—and thou must—'tis decreed—
Put down the archbishop, and rise in his stead!"

"Thou liest, thou old hag! With the cunning of hell,
Thou darest me to practise what thou dost foretell;

But there both thy master and thee I'll defy;
Yet that was my vision, I may not deny.
Mysterious being, unblest and unshriven!
Pray, hadst thou that secret from hell or from heaven?"

"I had it, proud Priest, from a fountain sublime,
That swells beyond nature, and streams beyond time;
And though from the same source thy warning might come,
Yet mine was the essence, and thine but the scum.
I heard and I saw, what, if thou hadst but seen,
A terror thy mortal existence had been;
For thou hadst grown rigid as statue of lead —
A beacon of terror for sinners to dread!
Thou thinkst thou hast learning and knowledge inborn —
Proud Priest of Inchaffery, I laugh thee to scorn!
Thou knowst less of nature, where Spirits roam free,
Than a mole does of heaven, or a worm does of thee.

"Begone with thy gold, thy ambition, and pride!
I have told thee thy vision, and solved it beside.
But dare not to doubt the event I foretell —
The thing is decreed both in heaven and hell,
That thou, an arch-traitor, must do a good deed, —
Put down the Archbishop, and rise in his stead!"

Away went the Abbot with crosier and cowl,
And visions of grandeur disturbing his soul;
And as he rode on, to himself thus he said,—
"The counsels of heaven must all be obey'd;
Nor throne, church, nor state, can security have,
Till that haughty prelate be laid in his grave.
Let that nerve my arm, and my warrandice be."—
Well said, thou good Abbot of Inchafferye!

The Archbishop had plotted too deep in the state;
The nobles were moved 'gainst the man of their hate;
The monarch was roused, and pronounced in his wrath
A sentence unseemly,—the Archbishop's death!
But that very night that his doom was decreed,
A private assassin accomplish'd the deed.
The court was amazed, for loud whisperings came
Of a deed too unhallow'd and horrid to name:
Abroad rush'd the rumour, and would not be stemm'd—
The murderer is captured, convicted, condemn'd—
Condemn'd to be hang'd like a dog on a tree.
"Who is the assassin?—Pray who may it be?—
Ha!—the worthy good Abbot of Inchafferye!"

In darkness and chains the poor Abbot is laid,
And soon his death-warrant is to him convey'd;

His hour is announced, but he laughs it to scorn,
And sends an express for the Witch of Gray Thorn.
She came at his call, and though hideous her form,
And shrivel'd, and crouch'd, like a crane in a storm,
Yet in her dim eye that was hollow'd by time
The joy of a demon was gleaming sublime,
And with a weak laugh, 'twixt a scream and a hiss,
She cried, " Pray, great Abbot, is all come to this?"

" Where now thy bright omens, thou hag of the night?
Come read me this riddle, and read it aright.
So far thou saidst truth—the Archbishop is dead;
Thy bodement confirm—shall I rise in his stead?"

" Yes—up to the gallows!" the beldam replied.
" This day the Archbishop had suffer'd and died;
But headlong on death I have caused thee to run.
Ha, ha! I have conquer'd, and thou art undone!"

" Oh had I the hands which these fetters degrade,
To tear out thy tongue for the lies it hath made!
May Heaven's dread vengeance depart from thee never,
But descend and enthral thee for ever and ever!"

" Ay, curse thou away; to the theme I agree;
Thy curse is worth ten thousand blessings to me.
Ha, ha! thou proud Priest, I have won! I have won!
Thy course of ambition and cruelty's run.
Thou torturedst me once, till my nerves were all torn,
For crimes I was free of as babe newly born;
'Twas that which compell'd me, in hour of despair,
To sell soul and body to the Prince of the Air,
That great dreadful spirit, of power and of pride;
His servant I am, and thy curse I deride.
For vengeance I did it—for vengeance alone;
Without that, futurity lurements had none.
I have now had full measure in sight of the sun—
Ha, ha! thou proud Priest, I have won! I have won!
'Tis not thy poor life that my vengeance can tame,
It flies to the future, to regions of flame,
To witness, exulting, th' extreme of thy doom,
And harass thy being 'mid terror and gloom.
Ay, grind thou thy fetters, and fume as thou wilt,
Oh, how I rejoice in thy rage and thy guilt!
And more—I have promise may well strike thee dumb,
To be nurse to thy spirit for ages to come:
Think how thou wilt joy that the task shall be mine
To wreak and to teaze thee with tortures condign,

O'er cat'racts of sulphur, and torrents of flame,
And horrors that have not exposure nor name.
Until this vile world of lust and of crime
Have sounded through fire the last trumpet of Time,
Adieu, bloody Priest! in thy hour of despair,
When thy soul is forthcoming, there's *one* shall be there."

The Abbot was borne to the scaffold away,
He stretch'd out his hands, and attempted to pray;
But at that dire moment there sounded a knell
Close to his stunn'd ear, 'twixt a laugh and a yell;
And a voice said aloud, that seem'd creaking with hate,
" Ha, ha! thou proud Priest, it's too late! it's too late!"
He shiver'd, he shrunk, dropp'd the sign, and was hung;
He gasp'd, and he died, and that moment there rung
This sound through the welkin so darksome and dun,
" I have thee! I have thee!—I have won! I have won!"

A GREEK PASTORAL.

WHERE proud Olympus rears his head,
As white as the pall of the sheeted dead,
And mingling with the clouds that sail
On heaven's pure bosom, softly pale,
Till men believe that the hoary cloud
Is part of the mountain's mighty shroud,
While far below, in lovely guise,
The enchanted vale of Tempe lies,
There sat a virgin of peerless fame—
Thessalia's sweetest, comeliest dame!—
Gazing upon the silver stream,
As if in a rapt Elysian dream.
Far, far below her glowing eye,
Standing on an inverted sky,
Where clouds and mountains seem'd to swingle,
And Ossa with Olympus mingle,
She saw a youth, of manly hue,
In robes of green and azure blue,

Of grape, of orange, and of rose,
And every dye the rainbow knows;
The nodding plumes his temples graced,
His sword was girded to his waist:
And much that maiden's wonder grew,
At a vision so comely and so new;
And, in her simplicity of heart,
She ween'd it all the enchanter's art.

As straining her eyes adown the steep,
At this loved phantom of the deep,
She conjured him to ascend, and bless
With look of love his shepherdess.
And when she beheld him mount the tide,
With eagle eye and stately stride,
She spread her arms and her bavaroy,
And scream'd with terror and with joy.

The comely shade, approaching still
To the surface of the silent rill,
Beckon'd the maid with courteous grace,
And look'd her fondly in the face,
Till even that look she could not bear,
It was so witching and so dear.

She turn'd her eyes back from the flood,
And there a Scottish warrior stood,
Of noble rank and noble mien,
And glittering in his tartans sheen.

She neither fainted, scream'd, nor fled,
But there she sat astonished;
Her eyes o'er his form and features ran —
She turn'd to the shadow, then the man,
Till at last she fix'd a look serene
Upon the stranger's manly mien;
Her ruby lips fell wide apart,
High beat her young and guileless heart,
Which of itself reveal'd the tale,
By the quiverings of its snowy veil, —
A living statue feminine,
A model cast in mould divine;
There she reclined, enchanted so,
She moved not finger, eye, nor toe,
For fear one motion might dispel
The great enchanter's thrilling spell:

" 'Tis all enchantment! Such a grace
Ne'er ray'd a human virgin's face;

'Tis all enchantment,—rock and river—
May the illusion last for ever!"
Exclaim'd the youth—"O maiden dear,
Are such enchantments frequent here?"

"Yes, very!" said this mould of love,
But hand or eye she did not move,
But whispering said,
As if afraid
Her breath would melt the comely shade,
"Yes, very! This enchanted stream
Has visions raised in maiden's dream,
Of lovers' joys, and bowers of bliss,
But never aught so sweet as this.
Oh, pass not like fleeting cloud away!
Last, dear illusion!—last for aye!
And tell me, if on earth there dwell
Men suiting woman's love so well."

YOUTH.

"I came from the isle of the evening sun,
Where the solans roost, and the wild deer run;
Where the giant oaks have a gnarl'd form,
And the hills are coped with the cloud and the storm;

Where the hoar frost gleams on the valleys and brakes,
And a ceiling of crystal roofs the lakes;
And there are warriors in that land,
With helm on head and sword in hand,
And tens of thousands roving free,
All robed and fair as him you see.
I took the field to lead my own
Forward to glory and renown;
I learn'd to give the warrior word,
I learn'd to sway the warrior's sword,
Till a strange enchantment on me fell—
How I came here I cannot tell.

"There came to the field an old gray man,
With a silver beard and a visage wan,
And out of the lists he beckon'd me,
And began with a tale of mystery,
Which soon, despite of all control,
Took captive my surrender'd soul.
With a powerful sway,
It roll'd away,
Till evening dropp'd her curtain gray,
And the bittern's cry
Was heard on high,
And the lamps of glory begemm'd the sky;

Yet still the amazing tale proceeded,
And still I follow'd, and still I heeded,—
For darkness or light,
The day or the night,
The last or the first,
Or hunger or thirst,
To me no motive could impart,—
It was only the tale that charm'd my heart.

"We posted on till the morning sun,
And still the tale was never done;
Faster and faster the old man went,
Faster and faster I ran, intent
That tale of mystery out to hear,
Till the ocean's roll-call met my ear;
For the forest was past, and the shore was won,
And still the tale was never done.

"He took to a boat, but said no word,
I follow'd him in of my own accord,
And spread the canvass to the wind,
For I had no power to stay behind:
We sail'd away, and we sail'd away,
I cannot tell how many a day,—

But the winsome moon did wax and wane,
And the stars dropp'd blood on the azure main,
And still my soul with burning zeal
Lived on the magic of that tale,
Till we came to this enchanted river,
When the old gray man was gone for ever.
He faded like vapour before the sun,
And in a moment the tale was done.
And here am I left,
Of all bereft,
Except this zone of heavenly weft,
With the flowers of Paradise inwove,
The soft and silken bands of love.
Art thou the angel of this glade—
A peri, or a mortal maid?"

MAIDEN.

"It is all enchantment! Once on a time
I dwelt in a distant eastern clime—
O, many a thousand miles away,
Where our day is night, and our night is day,
Where beauty of woman is no bliss,
And the Tigris flows a stream like this.
I was a poor and fatherless child,
And my dwelling was in the woodland wild,

Where the elves waylaid me out and in;
And my mother knew them by their din,
And charm'd them away from our little cot,—
For her eyes could see them, but mine could not.

" One summer night, which I never can rue,
I dream'd a dream that turn'd out true:
I thought I stray'd on enchanted ground,
Where all was beauty round and round;
The copse and the flowers were full in bloom,
And the breeze was loaden with rich perfume.
There I saw two golden butterflies,
That shone like the sun in a thousand dyes;
And the eyes on their wings that glow'd amain,
Were like the eyes on the peacock's train.
I did my best
To steal on their rest,
As they hung on the cowslip's damask breast;
But my aim they knew,
And shier they grew,
And away from flower to flower they flew.
I ran—I bounded as on wings,
For my heart was set on the lovely things,
And I call'd, and conjured them to stay,
But they led me on, away, away!

Till they brought me to enchanted ground,
When a drowsiness my senses bound;
And when I sat me down to rest,
They came and they flutter'd round my breast;
And when I laid me down to sleep,
They lull'd me into a slumber deep;
And I heard them singing, my breast above,
A strain that seem'd a strain of love:—
It was sung in a shrill and soothing tone,
By many voices join'd in one.

Cradle Song of the Elves.

Hush thee, rest thee, harmless dove!
Child of pathos, and child of love!
Thy father is laid
In his cold deathbed,
Where waters encircle the lowly dead;
But his rest is sweet
In his windingsheet,
And his spirit lies at his Saviour's feet.
Then hush thee, rest thee, child of bliss!
Thou flower of the eastern wilderness!
Thy mother has waked in her cot of the wild,
And has wail'd for the loss of her only child;

But the prayer is said,
And the tear is shed,
And her trust in her God unaltered;
But Oh! if she knew
Of thy guardians true,
And the scenes of bliss that await for you,
She would hymn her joys to the throne above—
Hush thee, rest thee, child of love!

Hush thee, rest thee, fatherless one!
Joy is before thee, and joy alone;
There is not a fay that haunts the wild,
That has power to hurt the orphan child:
For the angels of light,
In glory bedight,
Are hovering around by day and by night,—
A charge being given
To spirits of Heaven,
That the elves of malice afar be driven.
Then, hush thee, rest thee, lovely creature!
Till a change is wrought in thy mortal nature.

"When I awoke from this dreamless slumber,
There were beings around me without number:

They had human faces, of heaven beaming,
And wings upon their shoulders streaming;
Their eyes had a soft, unearthly flame,
And their lovely locks were all the same;
Their voices like those of children young,
And their language was not said, but sung:
I ween'd myself in the home above,
Among beings of happiness and love.

"Then they laid me down so lightsome and boon,
In a veil that was like a beam of the moon,
Or a ray of the morning, passing fair,
And wove in the loom of the gossamer;
And they bore me aloft, over tower and tree,
And over the land, and over the sea:
There were seven times seven on either side,
And their dazzling robes stream'd far and wide.
It was such a sight as man ne'er saw,
Which pencil of heaven alone could draw,
If dipp'd in the morning's glorious dye,
Or the gorgeous tints of the evening sky,
Or in the bright celestial river,
The fountain of light, that wells for ever.

" But whither they bore me, and what befell,
For the soul that's within me, I dare not tell;
No language could make you to conceive it,
And if you did, you would not believe it:
But after a thousand visions past,
This is my resting-place at last.
These flocks and fields they gave to me,
And they crown'd me the Queen of Thessaly.
And, since that time, I must confess
I've no experience had of less
Than perfectest, purest happiness;
And now I tremble lest love's soft spell
Should break the peace I love so well."

YOUTH.

" No! love is the source of all that's sweet,
And only for happy beings meet,—
The bond of creation since time began,
That brought the grace of heaven to man.
Let us bathe in its bliss without control,
And love with all the heart and soul;
For mine are with thee, and only thee,
Thou Queen of the maidens of Thessaly!"

MAIDEN.

" If thou couldst love as a virgin can,
And not as sordid selfish man;
If thy love for me
From taint were as free
As the evening breeze from the Salon sea,
Or the odours hale
Of the morning gale,
Breathed over the flowers of Tempe's vale;
And no endearment or embrace,
That would raise a blush on a virgin's face,
Or a saint's below, or a spirit's above,—
Then I could love!—Oh, as I could love!"

YOUTH.

" Thou art too gentle, pure, and good,
For a lover of earthly flesh and blood;
But I will love thee and cherish thee so,
As a maiden was never loved here below;
With a heavenly aim,
And a holy flame,
And an endearment that wants a name;

I will lead thee where the breeze is lightest,
And where the fountain wells the brightest,
Where the nightingale laments the oftest,
And where the buds of flowers are softest.
There in the glade,
My lovely maid,
I will fold within this rainbow plaid;
I will press her to my faithful breast,
And watch her calm and peaceful rest,
And o'er each aspiration dear,
I will breathe a prayer to Mercy's ear;
And no embrace or kiss shall be,
That a saint in heaven will blush to see."

Then the Maiden sank on his manly breast,
As the tabernacle of her rest;
And as there, with closed eyes, she lay,
She almost sigh'd her soul away,
As she gave her hand to the stranger guest,
The comely youth of the stormy west.—

Thus ends my yearly offering bland,
The Laureate's Lay of the Fairy Land.

A SUNDAY PASTORAL.

COLIN.

Good morning, Katie—Fie, for shame!
To sleep sae lang ye 're sair to blame:
Then at your glass to smile an' smirk,
An' be the hindmost at the kirk!

KATE.

Ay, 'tis o'er true—Oh, waes my heart!
An' to reprove is weel your part;
Your neighbours o' their faults to tell,
When ye 're sae early there yoursell!

COLIN.

Ah, cunning Kate! I ken your way,
An' darena wrangle wi' 'e the day;

For ye 're sae tart when ye begin;
Ye lead ane into words o' sin,
An' now, when we hae met thegither,
An' like sae weel to be wi' ither,
Let 's chat, without a' taunts or scorning,
O' things befitting Sabbath morning.
I am o'er late, an' sair to blame—
But, oh, I've sic a charge at hame!

KATE.

Nae doubt, nae doubt! 'Tis a' o'er true,—
Naebody else has aught to do;
Ilk turn to Colin's hand maun lie,
The lasses a' to court forbye!

COLIN.

Now, Kate, I canna stand sic joking,
There 's nought on earth is sae provoking;
When weel ye ken I never parl
Either to kiss, or court, or quarrel,
Or sit me down to mince or mell
Wi' ony lass except yoursell.

KATE.

Alas! poor lad, ye're sair abused then,
An' fausely, wickedly accused then;
Sic tales are through the country fleeing!—
But then the country's ill for leeing.
It wasna true that Meg M'Gill
Cam greeting to you on the hill?
I heard sic story, an' the cause o't.
It wasna true;—I'm sure it was not?

COLIN.

'Tis hard on twall—Good morning, Kate;
I hate at preachings to be late;
Besides, it's sinfu' to get mad
At sic a glib-tongued wicked jad.

KATE.

Colin, I'll gang as fast as you
On this fine day, and faster too;
Besides, I'll chat of what you will,
The Bible, or the Papish Bill;
The statutes of the ancient law,
Or beauties of Queen Bathsheba.
Now, tell me, Colin, on your life,
What think you o' that winsome wife?

COLIN.

Kate, ye're a witch — sae haud your tongue;
An elf sae wicked, yet sae young,
Was never nursed on mother's knee —
What are Bathsheba's faults to me?

KATE.

Oh, nought, to you! Wha said they were?
I only wanted to prefer
Some Scripture argument 'bout sin,
And chanced with woman to begin.
But, Colin, 'tis right strange o' you,
Yet I hae noted, an' 'tis true,
Whene'er o' womankind I hint,
Then up you flee like fire frae flint, —
Frae whilk it weel might understood be,
That things are no just as they should be.

COLIN.

Sweet Kate! wi' that provokin' tongue
My heart wi' rage is often wrung,
But when I turn me round, an' see
The wily twinkle o' your ee,

The cherry cheek an' dimpled chin,
My heart-strings dirl my breast within.
Kate, I suspect, that, chance what may,
We 'll hardly reach the kirk the day;
We wad be blamed by matrons dour,
Gaun in at sic a daftlike hour,
An' some auld maids I ken beside
Wad cast us looks we couldna bide.
Let 's turn, an' up beneath the heuch
O' the wild glén o' Gilmanscleuch,
We 'll spend, in nature's green alcove,
The day in pure delights of love;
Read on our Bibles, pray bedeen,
An' maybe steal a kiss between.
If there 's a blink o' heavenly bliss
On human nature, it is this.

KATE.

Weel, Colin, I shall not gainsay,—
A wilfu' man maun hae his way;
Since ye propose 't, an' think nae shame,
If 'tis a sin, ye 'll bear the blame.
But tell me this,—Though gay an' braw,
War ye gaun to the kirk ava?

COLIN.

Whisht, Kate! an' speerna that again—
There's maybe mae to blame than ane;
There are some things 'tween man and maid
Mair natural to be thought than said;
But now, our resting-place is here,—
Come to my side, my comely dear,
Close to my side, nor ance avert
The vision dearest to my heart.
Look round you, Kate; the scene you see
Is wild as mountain scene can be:
Here sit we in a hollow swarth,
Scoop'd from the bosom o' the earth;
Our palace-wall the shaggy fell;
Our couch of state the heather-bell;
The sounding rivulet, combined
With music of the mountain wind,
The only anthem which we list;
Our canopy the yielding mist;
Yet here, within our desert den,
Far frae the walks and eyes of men,
Think o' our heavenly Maker's kindness,
For a' our sins an' mental blindness;
Beyond the bliss o' kingly bowers
An earthly happiness is ours.

O, Katie, when this scene I spy,
Imbedded in thy deep blue eye
Like a wee vision o' the mind,
A dream of heaven an' earth combined,
My ardent soul is all on flame
With a delight that wants a name—
A flame so holy an' divine,
An angel's heart might envy mine.
My own rapt image, too, I see,
As if I stood 'twixt heaven and thee—
Forbid it, a' ye powers above!
An' oh, forgie this tear o' love!
For ne'er was vision so complete
In window of a soul so sweet.

KATE.

Colin, I likena sic pathetics;
When chaps get into their poetics,
They rave on like the winter winds,
An' mischief whiles comes in their minds:
Sae, that I still may haud you dear,
An' keep you sober and sincere,
Kneel down upon that purple lea,
An' pray to God for you an' me—

The path o' grace has a beginning,
An' praying winna gang wi' sinning;
'Tis sweet an' comely to express
Our homage in the wilderness,
An' train our youthfu' minds away
Frae courting on the Sabbath day.

Colin, without another word,
Kneel'd down upon the lonely sward,
His comely face turn'd to the sky,
With ardour in his dark blue eye;
And thus unto his God he pray'd,
As near as 't can in rhyme be said:

COLIN.

O Thou, who dwell'st beyond yon sun!
Where the sinful soul can never won,—
Thou God of all beings on earth that dwell,
The angels of heaven, an' spirits of hell,—
Oh! wilt thou deign, in thy love divine,
To list to such a prayer as mine?
Not for myself do I crave thine ear,
But for one beside, than life more dear;

And for her sake I heard shall be,
For a virgin's soul is dear to thee.

Then Thou, who reared'st yon ample sky,
And planted the Paradise on high,
When the morning stars together sung,
And its arch with hymns of angels rung;
Who placed the sun on his golden throne,
His God's vicegerent, and His alone;
Who clothed the moon in her silver veil,
And the little stars in their diamond mail;
Who wall'd the ocean's mighty wave,
O'er coral beds to roll and rave;
And form'd these mountains, great and small,
And the soul of man, the last of all—
O, hear in Heaven, most graciously,
For we had our lives and souls from thee!

O Thou, who laid'st thine infant head
In a manger for thy cradle bed;
When the spirits of guilt were moved with awe,
And the angels marvell'd at what they saw—
The Babe of Heaven hush'd to his rest
Upon an earthly virgin's breast,

Then yield his life upon the tree,
And lie in the grave for such as me—
O hear us in Heaven, thou Holy One!
For in thy merits we trust alone!

Thou Spirit of Grace, adored, believed,
Great messenger all unconceived;
Thou THREE in ONE, and ONE in THREE,
Potent, supreme Divinity,
As one great God we worship thee!
Then hear our prayers whilst here we live,
And when thou hearest, Lord forgive!

We have no earthly thing to crave;
We are more than happy with what we have:—
We have youth and health, and love beside,
And thee for our father and our guide;
Thy own blue heavens smiling o'er us;
Religion, hope, and the world before us;
And all we can do, is to express
Our gratitude and our thankfulness.

One blessing would earthly hope fulfil,
If 'tis accordant with thy will:—

May we two, kneeling Thee before,
Be join'd as one for evermore!
And that a prospect may remain,
Of acting earthly scenes again,
May she be as a fruitful vine——

KATE.

Stop, Colin, stop! I canna join!
Ye may pray for marriage gin ye will,
To think of that can do no ill;
Its sinless joys our God will grant them—
We'll pray for bairnies when we want them.
Ye cou'dna ask for aught that's worse,
Than the heaviest portion o' woman's curse.

COLIN.

Ah, my dear Kate! gin ye be spared,
You 'll change your chime on that award.
If pure affection 's from above,
If " love is heaven, and heaven is love,"
If loveliness conceived may be,
Can eye a sight so lovely see,
As a young comely mother's rest,
With sweet babe to her bosom press'd;

Its round and chubby cheek laid low,
Misshapen on her breast of snow?
Ah, Kate! if pure, unmingled bliss
Be found in life's imperfectness,
All love, all fondness is outdone
By mother's o'er her first-born son:
That glow is bright, its workings kind,
Calm, chasten'd, ardent, yet refined.
I think,—O! may I be forgiven—
That nought can lovelier be in heaven,
Far less upon the earth below;
Methinks I see the vision now——

What, Katie, do ye rue our meeting?
I think ye're fuffing now, an' greeting?

KATE.

Tuts! what for will ye speak sae queer,
Of things unmeet for maiden's ear?
I canna bide that stuff sae sensuous,
It sounds like something that 's licentious:
Yet these are truths the heart that strike——
Ye may pray for babies gin ye like,

COLIN.

Ha, Katie! truth will aye bear sway,
An' nature work in her ain way,
For ye are nature's child complete,
A mountain rose unsoil'd an' sweet,
A gem the desert that perfumes,
A flower that hardly kens it blooms.
When we grow auld, an' bow'd wi' age,
We 'll make an yearly pilgrimage
Unto this wild an' lonely scene,
An' greet o'er days lang past an' gane.
'Twill mind me of thy guileless heart,
Of what remains and what thou wert,—
And I'll think of a day of bliss,
And maiden made to love an' kiss,
Wha aince gart me the preaching miss:
An' waur than that; when her behest
A solemn task had on me press'd,
She flew up wi' a wicked screed,
An' pat a' praying frae my head.

KATE.

Here, with the tear drap in my ee,
Colin, I beg you'll pardon me.

I did amiss, 'mang passions rife,
But could not help it for my life.
In my reproof, though scarce you'll trow,
I was at least sincere as you.
And now I beg of me you 'll take
This book, an' keep it for my sake;
It was my honour'd father's gift
That day when I our cottage left,
With bitter grief, and youthfu' dread,
In the wide world to earn my bread.
" My bairn," quo' he, " ye 're gaun to leave me;
I hope through life you 'll never grieve me.
If ever sin your fancy brook,
Think on the Author of this book—
Think how he reads the heart within,
And grieves if you should yield to sin.
An' think o' your old father too,
And how his soul yearns over you.
An' O, my bairn, when I am dead,
Cling to this blessed book, an' read
Its holy precepts when you may;
An' God will give you grace to pray—
To pray in purity of heart.
Farewell, my bairn, since we maun part!"

Now, Colin, as my sole director,
My trusted, generous protector,
Here do I render up to thee
The charge of baith my book an' me;
And ne'er again, by it I swear,
'Twixt you and heaven to interfere.
Accept, dear Colin, the propine,
An' O forgie the heart that's thine!

He took the book, an first he kiss'd
The donor, then the volume bless'd,
And hid it in his bosom true,
While on his eyelids stood the dew;
Then hand in hand they trode the brae
That looks o'er Ettrick's 'wilder'd way,
An' parted on the mountain green,
Far happier than a king an' queen.

MAY OF THE MORIL GLEN.

I WILL tell you of ane wondrous tale,
As ever was told by man,
Or ever was sung by minstrel meet
Since this base world began:—

It is of ane May, and ane lovely May,
That dwelt in the Moril Glen,
The fairest flower of mortal frame,
But a devil amongst the men;

For nine of them stickit themselves for love,
And ten louped in the main,
And seven-and-thirty brake their hearts,
And never loved women again;

For ilk ane trowit she was in love,
And ran wodde for a while—
There was sicean language in every look,
And a speire in every smile.

And she had seventy scores of ewes,
That blett o'er dale and down,
On the bonnie braid lands of the Moril Glen,
And these were all her own;

And she had stotts, and sturdy steers,
And blithsome kids enew,
That danced as light as gloaming flies
Out through the falling dew;

And this May she had a snow-white bull,
The dread of the haill countrye,
And three-and-thretty good milk kye,
To bear him companye;

And she had geese and goslings too,
And ganders of muckil din,
And peacocks, with their gaudy trains,
And hearts of pride within;

And she had cocks with curled kaims,
  And hens, full crouse and glad,
That chanted in her own stack-yard,
  And cockillit and laid like mad;

But where her minnie gat all that gear,
  And all that lordly trim,
The Lord in Heaven he knew full well,
  But nobody knew but him;

For she never yielded to mortal man,
  To prince, nor yet to king—
She never was given in holy church,
  Nor wedded with ane ring.

So all men wist, and all men said;
  But the tale was in sore mistime,
For a maiden she could hardly be,
  With a daughter in beauty's prime.

But this bonnie May, she never knew
  A father's kindly claim;
She never was bless'd in holy church,
  Nor christen'd in holy name.

But there she lived an earthly flower
Of beauty so supreme,
Some fear'd she was of the mermaid's brood,
Come out of the salt sea fieme.

Some said she was found in a fairy ring,
And born of the fairy queen;
For there was a rainbow behind the moon
That night she first was seen.

Some said her mother was a witch,
Come frae ane far countrye;
Or a princess loved by a weird warlock
In a land beyond the sea!

Oh, there are doings here below
That mortal ne'er should ken;
For there are things in this fair world
Beyond the reach of men.

Ae thing most sure and certain was—
For the bedesman told it me—
That the knight who coft the Moril Glen
Ne'er spoke a word but three.

And the masons who biggit that wild ha' house
Ne'er spoke word good nor ill;
They came like a dream, and pass'd away
Like shadows o'er the hill.

They came like a dream, and pass'd away
Whither no man could tell;
But they ate their bread like Christian men,
And drank of the crystal well.

And whenever man said word to them,
They stay'd their speech full soon;
For they shook their heads, and raised their hands,
And look'd to Heaven aboon.

And the lady came—and there she 'bade
For mony a lonely day;
But whether she bred her bairn to God—
To read but and to pray—

There was no man wist, though all men guess'd,
And guess'd with fear and dread;
But oh she grew ane virgin rose,
To seemly womanheid!

And no man could look on her face,
And eyne that beam'd so clear,
But felt a stang gang through his heart,
Far sharper than a spear.

It was not like ane prodde or pang
That strength could overwin,
But like ane red hot gaud of iron
Reeking his heart within.

So that around the Moril Glen
Our brave young men did lie,
With limbs as lydder, and as lythe,
As duddis hung out to dry.

And aye the tears ran down in streams
Ower cheeks right woe-begone;
And aye they gasped, and they gratte,
And thus made piteous moan;—

"Alake that I had ever been born,
Or dandelit on the knee;
Or rockit in ane cradle bed,
Beneath a mother's ee!

" Oh! had I died before my cheek
To woman's breast had lain,
Then had I ne'er for woman's love
Endured this burning pain!

" For love is like the fiery flame
That quivers through the rain,
And love is like the pang of death
That splits the heart in twain.

" If I had loved earthly thing,
Of earthly blithsomeness,
I might have been beloved again,
And bathed in earthly bliss.

" But I have loved ane freakish fay
Of frowardness and sin,
With heavenly beauty on the face,
And heart of stone within.

" O, for the gloaming calm of death
To close my mortal day—
The last benighting heave of breath,
That rends the soul away!"

But word's gone east, and word's gone west,
'Mong high and low degree,
Quhille it went to the King upon the throne,
And ane wrothful man was he.—

"What!" said the King, "and shall we sit
In sackcloth mourning sad,
Quhille all mine lieges of the land
For ane young quean run mad?

"Go saddle me my milke-white steed,
Of true Megaira brode;
I will go and see this wondrous dame,
And prove her by the rode.

"And if I find her elfin queen,
Or thing of fairy kind,
I will burn her into ashes small,
And sift them on the wind!"

The King hath chosen fourscore knights,
All busked gallantlye,
And he is away to the Moril Glen,
As fast as he can dree.

And when he came to the Moril Glen,
Ae morning fair and clear,
This lovely May on horseback rode
To hunt the fallow deer.

Her palfrey was of snowy hue,
A pale unearthly thing,
That revell'd over hill and dale
Like bird upon the wing.

Her screen was like a net of gold,
That dazzled as it flew;
Her mantle was of the rainbow's red,
Her rail of its bonny blue.

A golden comb with diamonds bright,
Her seemly virgin crown,
Shone like the new moon's lady light
O'er cloud of amber brown.

The lightning that shot from her eyne,
Flicker'd like elfin brand;
It was sharper nor the sharpest spear
In all Northumberland.

The hawk that on her bridle arm
Outspread his pinions blue,
To keep him steady on the perch
As his loved mistress flew,

Although his een shone like the gleam,
Upon ane sable sea,
Yet to the twain that ower them beam'd,
Compared they could not be.

Like carry ower the morning sun
That shimmers to the wind,
So flew her locks upon the gale,
And stream'd afar behind.

The King he wheel'd him round about,
And calleth to his men,
" Yonder she comes, this wierdly witch,
This spirit of the glen!

" Come rank your master up behind,
This serpent to belay;
I'll let you hear me put her down
In grand polemic way."

Swift came the maid ower strath and stron—
Nae dantonit dame was she—
Until the King her path withstood,
In might and majestye.

The virgin cast on him a look,
With gay and graceful air,
As on some thing below her note,
That ought not to have been there.

The King, whose belt was like to burst,
With speeches most divine
Now felt ane throbbing of the heart,
And quaking of the spine.

And aye he gasped for his breath,
And gaped in dire dismay,
And waved his arm, and smote his breast;
But word he could not say.

The spankie grewis they scowr'd the dale,
The dun deer to restrain;
The virgin gave her steed the rein,
And follow'd, might and main.

" Go bring her back," the King he cried;
" This reifery must not be.
Though you should bind her hands and feet,
Go bring her back to me."

The deer she flew, the garf and grew
They follow'd hard behind;
The milk-white palfrey brush'd the dew
Far fleeter nor the wind.

But woe betide the lords and knights,
That taiglit in the dell!
For though with whip and spur they plied,
Full far behind they fell.

They look'd outowre their left shoulders,
To see what they might see,
And there the King, in fit of love,
Lay spurring on the lea.

And aye he batter'd with his feet,
And rowted with despair,
And pull'd the grass up by the roots,
And flang it on the air.

" What ails, what ails my royal liege?
Such grief I do deplore."
" Oh I'm bewitch'd," the King replied,
" And gone for evermore!

" Go bring her back—go bring her back—
Go bring her back to me;
For I must either die of love,
Or own that dear ladye!

" That god of love out through my soul
Hath shot his arrows keen;
And I am enchanted through the heart,
The liver, and the spleen."

The deer was slain; the royal train
Then closed the virgin round,
And then her fair and lily hands
Behind her back were bound.

But who should bind her winsome feet?
That bred such strife and pain,
That sixteen brave and belted knights
Lay gasping on the plain.

And when she came before the King,
  Ane ireful carle was he;
Saith he, " Dame, you must be my love,
  Or burn beneath ane tree.

" For I am so sore in love with thee,
  I cannot go nor stand;
And thinks thou nothing to put down
  The King of fair Scotland?"

" No, I can ne'er be love to thee,
  Nor any lord thou hast;
For you are married men each one,
  And I a maiden chaste.

" But here I promise, and I vow
  By Scotland's King and crown,
Who first a widower shall prove,
  Shall claim me as his own."

The King hath mounted his milk-white steed,—
  One word he said not more,—
And he is away from the Moril Glen,
  As ne'er rode king before.

He sank his rowels to the naife,
And scour'd the muir and dale,
He held his bonnet on his head,
And fouted to the gale,

Till wives ran skreighing to the door,
Holding their hands on high;
They never saw king in love before,
In such extremitye.

And every lord and every knight
Made off his several way,
All galloping as they had been mad,
Withoutten stop or stay.

But there was never such dool and pain
In any land befel;
For there is wickedness in man,
That grieveth me to tell.

There was one eye, and one alone,
Beheld the deeds were done;
But the lovely Queen of fair Scotland
Ne'er saw the morning sun;

And seventy-seven wedded dames,
As fair as e'er were born,
The very pride of all the land,
Were corps before the morn.

Then there was nought but mourning weeds,
And sorrow, and dismay;
While burial met with burial still,
And jostled by the way.

And graves were howkit in green kirkyards,
And howkit deep and wide;
While bedlars swairfit for very toil,
The comely corps to hide.

The graves, with their unseemly jaws,
Stood gaping day and night
To swallow up the fair and young;—
It was ane grievous sight!

And the bonny May of the Moril Glen
Is weeping in despair,
For she saw the hills of fair Scotland
Could be her home nae mair.

Then there was chariots came o'er night,
As silent and as soon
As shadow of ane little cloud
In the wan light of the moon.

Some said they came out of the rock,
And some out of the sea;
And some said they were sent from hell,
To bring that fair ladye.

When the day sky began to frame
The grizly eastern fell,
And the little wee bat was bound to seek
His dark and eery cell,

The fairest flower of mortal frame
Pass'd from the Moril Glen;
And ne'er may such a deadly eye
Shine amongst Christian men!

In seven chariots, gilded bright,
The train went o'er the fell,
All wrapt within ane shower of hail;
Whither no man could tell;

But there was a ship in the Firth of Forth,
The like ne'er sail'd the faeme,
For no man of her country knew,
Her colours, or her name.

Her mast was made of beaten gold,
Her sails of the silken twine,
And a thousand pennons stream'd behind,
And trembled o'er the brine.

As she lay mirror'd in the main,
It was a comely view,
So many rainbows round her play'd,
With every breeze that blew.

And the hailstone shroud it rattled loud,
Right over ford and fen,
And swathed the flower of the Moril Glen
From eyes of sinful men.

And the hailstone shroud it wheel'd and row'd,
As wan as death unshriven,
Like dead cloth of ane angel grim,
Or winding sheet of heaven.

It was a fearsome sight to see
Toil through the morning gray,
And whenever it reach'd the comely ship,
She set sail and away.

She set her sail before the gale,
As it began to sing,
And she heaved and rocked down the tide,
Unlike an earthly thing.

The dolphins fled out of her way
Into the creeks of Fife,
And the blackguard seals they yowlit for dread,
And swam for death and life.

And the pellochis snifter'd, puff'd, and row'd
In dreddour sad to see,
And like the rain-drop from the cloud,
They shot along the sea;

And they bullerrit into the bays of Fife,
As if through terror blind,
And toss'd and tumbled on the strand,
In great dismay of mind.

But aye the ship, the bonny ship,
Outowre the green wave flew,
Swift as the solan on the wing,
Or terrified sea-mew.

No billow breasted on her prow,
Nor levell'd on the lee;
She seem'd to sail upon the air,
And never touch the sea.

And away, and away went the bonny ship,
Which man never more did see;
But whether she went to heaven or hell,
Was ne'er made known to me.

THE END.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by ANDREW SHORTREED, Thistle Lane.


00052830

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 February, 2016